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AN INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

FOR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY

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PREFACE

This book is to some extent a result of the kind reception accorded *English Verse,* a volume of annotated selections, illustrating the principles and history of English versification, which appeared about six years ago. Some who have made use of that book have felt the need of a treatise which should undertake to give a more extended account of matters of which the plan of the earlier volume allowed only brief mention in notes. And when it came to the point of preparing such a treatise, it seemed likely that similar needs would be served by including some account of the elements of poetry other than versification, so far as students of English literature have to analyze them. The present volume, then, differs from *English Verse* in three principal ways: it is more frankly dogmatic, attempting to state principles with some fullness instead of merely bringing together the materials for the inductive study of the subject; it includes a discussion of the imaginative and spiritual aspects of poetry, instead of limiting itself to verse form; and it omits altogether the historical treatment of the material, except where this is necessarily involved in clearness of definition. For the most part only such brief and simple discussion has been undertaken as

is suited to an introductory handbook, and this inevitably results in a certain appearance of assertiveness or dogmatism which would be avoidable in a more elaborate work; but the attempt has been made always to indicate the still unsettled aspects of the subject, and to include—in the sections printed in smaller type—a brief account of the state of opinion on such doubtful matters, with references to the most helpful sources of information. These smaller-type sections, then, give the more thoughtful student a very simple introduction to the study of the history of poetic theory. Furthermore, the table of contents and the index have been prepared with some care, with a view to the possibility that students who do not care (or whose teachers do not care to have them) to follow the book from beginning to end may conveniently take up any of its sections in any desired order, or use it rather as a work of reference.

One cannot help feeling that there is room for much doubt on questions of proportion and emphasis, in the case of so brief a manual on so large a subject. It has been the writer's effort to settle these questions on the basis of actual teaching experience, asking always what is most important for the student of poetry, aside from what he can supply through his own intelligence and taste. And in the choice of illustrative examples and of references for collateral reading, theoretical excellence and completeness have been subordinated to the considera

tion of what the student may be presumed actually to be reading, to have read, or to undertake to read. It can hardly be hoped, however, that the judgment of any one will wholly satisfy others in these respects. In particular, it may be thought unfortunate that the chapters on metrical form should bulk more largely than those dealing with the inner elements of poetry; to which there is only the reply that matters of metrical form appear to be, not the most important, but those that present most difficulty to the student and require the most careful examination of details still under debate.

Chapter Four, on the fundamental problems of English rhythm, deals with the point of greatest difficulty in the whole range of the subject, and is to be regarded, not as making claim to originality, but as the most individual portion of this book. So recently as the time of publication of the earlier volume, *English Verse,* it seemed impracticable to dogmatize on the elements of our metres, with any hope of doing more than adding another note to the discordant jangle of voices on that dangerous subject. But there is evidence that conditions have become more hopeful; recent writers have seemed to tend more and more toward agreement on certain substantial principles; and while one must still wait, no doubt, for a generally accredited science of English prosody, it is perhaps safe to offer for the use of students a rather more pretentious body of doctrine than would have been reasonable hereto-

fore. Nearly twenty-five years ago appeared the first edition of Professor Gummere's *Handbook of Poetics,* in which it was clearly stated that "when the ear detects at regular intervals a recurrence of accented syllables, varying with unaccented, it perceives rhythm," and that "measured intervals of time are the basis of all verse;"—doctrines wholly in accord with the teachings of this book, and with the present tendency of metrical criticism. Yet even in that admirable handbook the further statement was made that "accent is the chief factor of modern verse;" and it is unfortunately probable that most of those who have used the book have emphasized this second (and questionable) statement at the expense of the first (and unquestionable). The present manual is based on the belief that the time has come to make it clear even to the elementary student that the two elements of rhythm, time and accent, must receive equal attention, and that he will do well to attach his study of verse rhythm to his study of music, as Sidney Lanier first urged us all to do,—without following Lanier in his more unguarded details.

Such a book as this should of course be used in connection with anthologies and other volumes giving abundant examples of the forms of poetry. To this end, in the chapters on metrical form, frequent references are included to *English Verse,* the plan of which made possible much fuller quotation of illustrative material. It may be added that the

poems cited by way of illustration have been chosen, so far as was entirely to the purpose, from the two volumes of Palgrave's *Golden Treasury,* in order to relate the manual in some degree to an anthology familiar and easily accessible to students.

Many books have been of service in the preparation of this study, and those specifically drawn upon are duly acknowledged in the proper places. But two should also be mentioned here as the cause of special obligation: Professors Gayley and Scott's *Introduction to the Methods and Materials of Literary Criticism,* and Mr. T. S. Omond's *English Metrists in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,*—both indispensable to the serious student of poetry. The second volume of Professor Saintsbury's *History of English Prosody* came to hand too late to be used; it is regrettable that references could not have been included to his discussion of such subjects as blank verse and the heroic couplet. It is also regrettable that use could not have been made of the forthcoming volumes of M. Verrier, a note on which is included in the bibliographical appendix, and which, when they appear, will deserve wide and careful reading. Finally, acknowledgment is due to the writer's colleagues, Professor A. G. Newcomer and Professor Henry D. Gray, who have kindly read portions of the manuscript and made a number of helpful suggestions.

R. M. A.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, CALIFORNIA,
January, 1909.

CONTENTS

Chapter I.

DEFINITIONS AND ORIGINS.

PAGE

Poetry Defined ... 1
(Definitions of various critics) ... 1
Poetry as a representative art ... 4
Its use of the sounds of speech ... 5
(The relations of poetry to the other arts) ... 6
Imitation and creation ... 8
Representation rather than communication ... 10
(Aristotelian and Baconian theories) ... 11
Universality ... 12
Metrical form ... 15
Emotional appeal ... 18
The imaginative element ... 19
Is poetry ever chiefly reasonable? ... 21
(Relation of poetry to oratory and romance) ... 23
Origins of Poetry ... 26
Communal character of early poetry ... 28

Chapter II.

THE CLASSES OR KINDS.

Methods of classification ... 31
The principal Types: Epic, Lyric, Dramatic ... 31
So-called Descriptive Poetry ... 33
Combinations of types: Lyrical Ballad ... 34
Dramatic Lyric ... 35
Other combinations ... 36
So-called Reflective Poetry ... 36

PAGE

THE PRINCIPAL TYPES.—*Continued.*
So-called Didactic Poetry 37
Satiric Poetry 40
Pastoral Poetry 40
THE EPIC 41
Two meanings of "epic" 41
The national epic 42
Communal and individual types of epic 43
Epic qualities 44
(Critical discussions of the epic) 44
Decay of the epic type 47
Variations of the epic type 49
The mock-epic 50
The ballad 50
Ballad qualities 51
Modern ballads 51
The metrical romance 51
Other narrative forms 53
Descriptive epic poems 54
THE LYRIC 55
Two meanings of "lyric" 55
Subjective character 56
Structure of the lyric 57
Form of the lyric 58
(Critical discussions of the lyric) 59
Methods of classification 61
Song lyrics 62
The Hymn 63
Lyrics of more literary character 64
Reflective lyrics 65
The Ode 66
The Elegy 68
The pastoral elegy 69
The Sonnet 70
Vers de Société 71
THE DRAMA 74
Composite character of the drama 74
Lyric and epic qualities combined 74
Language of dramatic poetry 75

PAGE

THE DRAMA.—*Continued.*

Structure of the drama 76
Form of the drama 77
Decay of dramatic poetry 78
(Critical discussions of the drama) 79
Dramas classified by external form 80
Dramas tending toward epic or lyric character 81
Classical and romantic dramas 82
Comedy and Tragedy 85
The pleasure of comedy 86
The pleasure of tragedy 87
("Poetic justice") 89
Mingling of comedy and tragedy 91
The burlesque drama 92

CHAPTER III.

THE BASIS OF POETRY (INTERNAL).

Problems of the inner nature of poetry 93
THE IMAGINATION 93
Imagination as a form of memory 93
The creative imagination 95
The interpretative imagination 97
An example from Shelley 98
An example from Dryden 99
An example from Keats 100
An example from Wordsworth 101
New combinations and interpretations made by the imagination 102
Fancy as an aspect of imagination 102
(Critical discussions of the imagination) 103
BEAUTY AS AN ELEMENT OF POETRY 112
Beauty as affecting poetic style 113
Beauty a very inclusive term 114
THE RELATION OF POETRY TO TRUTH 115
Are beauty and truth identical? 117
When is poetry truthful? 118

PAGE

THE RELATION OF POETRY TO TRUTH.—*Continued.*
Poetry as a teacher of man ... 118
(Critical discussions of the ideal in poetry) ... 120
HAS POETRY A SPECIAL KIND OF SUBJECT MATTER? ... 122
No limits to poetic material ... 123
The two methods of poetic treatment ... 126
HAS POETRY A SPECIAL STYLE? ... 128
The "neutral" style ... 129
The prosaic style ... 131
(Wordsworth's theory of style in poetry) ... 132
Sources of the qualities of poetical style ... 138
Concreteness ... 138
Beauty in concrete detail ... 141
Figurative language ... 142
The simile ... 142
The metaphor ... 144
Personification ... 145
Allegory ... 147
Other figurative forms ... 148
Choice of words for emotional association ... 150
Antiquated diction ... 153
Poetic license ... 153

CHAPTER IV.

THE BASIS OF POETRY (EXTERNAL).

RHYTHM DEFINED ... 155
The two elements of rhythm ... 157
Musical and verse rhythm compared ... 158
Rhythm in human speech ... 160
Rhythm in prose and verse distinguished ... 161
THE RELATION OF SPEECH STRESSES TO VERSE RHYTHM ... 164
Degrees of syllabic accent ... 166
Alterations of accent to fit the metrical scheme ... 167
Hovering accent ... 170
Summary of laws of verse accents ... 171
(Conflicting critical views as to the relation of speech and verse accents) ... 173

PAGE
THE RELATION OF SPEECH QUANTITIES TO VERSE RHYTHM... 175
Relation of quantity and accent 178
Quantity altered to fit the metrical scheme..... 180
Pauses used to complete time-intervals..... 183
Pauses compensating for missing syllables..... 184
Summary of laws of verse quantities..... 186
The adjustment of speech to rhythm..... 187
(Conflicting views as to the element of time or quantity in English verse)..... 188
(Musical notation for English verse)..... 190
RHYTHM AND THE INNER NATURE OF POETRY..... 193
Rhythm as a means of beauty..... 193
Rhythm as expressive of emotion... 195
Rhythm as a means of imaginative idealization..... 198
Rhythm as a modifier of crude reality..... 200
(Critical discussions of the place and function of the metrical element in poetry)..... 202
NON-RHYTHMICAL ELEMENTS OF VERSE FORM..... 206
Tone-quality..... 207
Similarity of sounds (alliteration, assonance, etc.).... 209
Sounds imaginatively suggestive..... 212
Beauty or melody in verse sounds..... 217
(Critical discussions of tone-quality)..... 218

CHAPTER V.

ENGLISH METRES.

THE TWO UNITS OF METRE..... 221
The foot..... 222
(Objections to the use of the term "foot" in English verse)..... 224
Significance of various names of feet..... 226
(Are iambic and trochaic verse rhythmically different?). 228
Practical methods of naming metres..... 231
THE PRINCIPAL METRICAL TYPES..... 232
Various exceptional feet..... 233
(The so-called amphibrach, tribrach, choriambus, and pæon)..... 234

PAGE

THE PRINCIPAL METRICAL TYPES.—*Continued.*
(The distinction between these foot names in classical and English prosody) 236
(The graphic representation of metres) 238
VARIATIONS FROM REGULAR METRICAL FORM 241
Change of particular feet by altering the arrangement of stress or number of syllables 241
(Trisyllabic feet; their relation to elision and slurring). 243
Metres characteristically variable 246
Æsthetic value of metrical variety 248
(Limits of metrical variation) 251
Truncation and extension of verses (catalexis; anacrusis; feminine ending) 254
The pause 258
The cesura 258
The end-pause 261
THE PRINCIPAL METRES 264
Iambic metres 264
Four-stress iambic verse 266
(Early and popular four-stress verse with irregular number of syllables) 267
Five-stress iambic verse 268
Heroic couplet 269
Blank verse 271
Six-stress iambic verse 276
Seven-stress iambic verse 277
Anapestic metres 277
Trochaic metres 280
Dactylic metres 282
The English "hexameter" 283
Other pseudo-classical metres 288

CHAPTER VI.

RIME AND STANZA FORMS.

NATURE AND FUNCTIONS OF RIME 290
Masculine and feminine rime 291
Triple rime 292
Internal rime 293
Half-stressed rime 296

PAGE

NATURE AND FUNCTIONS OF RIME.—*Continued.*
Imperfect rime 296
Identical rime 298
(Critical discussions of rime) 299
RIME USED AS AN ORGANIZING ELEMENT OF VERSE FORM 300
Rime forming couplet and *terza rima* 300
The stanza 301
Rime in the stanza 302
Sources of stanza effects 303
Stanzas as poetically expressive 305
Particular stanza forms classified 306
Distichs 306
Tercets 307
Quatrains 307
Five-line stanzas 311
Six-line stanzas 312
Seven-line stanzas 314
Eight-line stanzas 315
Nine-line stanzas 317
Ten-line stanzas 318
Refrain stanzas 319
Modern stanza varieties 321
Pseudo-classical stanzas 322
(Critical discussions of stanza forms) 323
THE SONNET 325
The strict Italian type 326
Bipartite character 326
The English type 328
The Spenserian type 329
Sources of sonnet effects 330
(Critical discussions of the sonnet) 331
FRENCH LYRICAL FORMS 332
Triolet 333
Rondeau and rondel 334
Villanelle 335
Ballade 336
Sestina 337
Pantoum 338
(Critical discussions of French lyrical forms) 338

PAGE

THE ODE 339
The strict Pindaric type. 340
The homostrophic type 342
The irregular type 342
The choral type 345
Related irregular verse forms 346
(Critical discussions of the ode and related verse forms) 347
APPENDIX 351
INDEX 359

AN INTRODUCTION TO POETRY.

CHAPTER I.

DEFINITIONS AND ORIGINS.

THE word Poetry is used both vaguely and variously, and as yet no single attempt to define it has met with general acceptance. For the purposes of this study it will be considered as *imaginative metrical discourse;* or, more explicitly, as *the art of representing human experiences, in so far as they are of lasting or universal interest, in metrical language, usually with chief reference to the emotions and by means of the imagination.*

Poetry defined.

Students of the subject will be interested to see other statements regarding the nature of poetry which from time to time have been made by critics,—some of them attempts at logical definition, others incidental but significant descriptions of the nature and attributes of poetry.

Coleridge: "A poem is that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its immediate object pleasure, not truth;

and from all other species, having this object in common with it, it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the whole, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component part." (*Biographia Literaria,* chap. xiv.)

Leigh Hunt: "Poetry is the utterance of a passion for truth, beauty, and power, embodying and illustrating its conceptions by imagination and fancy, and modulating its language on the principle of variety in uniformity." (Essay on "What is Poetry?" in *Imagination and Fancy.*)

Macaulay: "By poetry we mean the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce an illusion on the imagination, the art of doing by means of words what the painter does by means of colors." (Essay on Milton.)

Hazlitt: "Poetry is the natural impression of any object or event, by its vividness exciting an involuntary movement of imagination and passion, and producing, by sympathy, a certain modulation of the voice, or sounds, expressing it." (Essay "On Poetry in General.")

Shelley: "Poetry, in a general sense, may be defined to be the expression of the Imagination." (*A Defence of Poetry.*)

Wordsworth: "Poetry is the image of man and nature." "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity." (Preface to *Lyrical Ballads.*)

Matthew Arnold: "Poetry . . . . a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty." (Essay on "The Study of Poetry.")

Emerson: "Poetry is the perpetual endeavor to ex-

press the spirit of the thing, to pass the brute body and search the life and reason which causes it to exist." (Essay on "Poetry and Imagination.")

Carlyle: "Poetry, therefore, we will call musical Thought." (Lecture on "The Hero as Poet," in *Heroes and Hero-Worship.*)

Ruskin: "Poetry is the suggestion, by the imagination, of noble grounds for the noble emotions. I mean by the noble emotions those four principal sacred passions—Love, Veneration, Admiration, and Joy, . . . and their opposites—Hatred, Indignation (or Scorn), Horror, and Grief." (*Modern Painters,* Part IV.)

Poe: "I would define, in brief, the poetry of words as the rhythmical creation of beauty." (Essay on "The Poetic Principle.")

Alfred Austin: "Poetry is a transfiguration of life; in other words, an imaginative representation, in verse, of whatever men perceive, feel, think, or do." (Introduction to *The Human Tragedy,* ed. of 1889.)

E. C. Stedman: "Poetry is rhythmical, imaginative language expressing the invention, taste, thought, passion, and insight of the human soul." (*The Nature and Elements of Poetry.*)

Theodore Watts: "Absolute poetry is the concrete and artistic expression of the human mind in emotional and rhythmical language." (Article on "Poetry" in *Encyclopedia Britannica.*)

W. J. Courthope: "By poetry I mean the art of producing pleasure by the just expression of imaginative thought and feeling in metrical language." (*The Liberal Movement in English Literature.*)

D. Masson: "Poetry, as such, is cogitation in the language of concrete circumstance." (Essay on "Theories of Poetry.")

C. M. Gayley: "Poetry may be defined as the imaginative and emotive expression or suggestion of that which has significance, in the rhythmical and preferably metrical medium of language appropriate to the subject." (Introduction to *The Principles and Progress of English Poetry.*)

M. H. Liddell: "Poetry is literature, usually of a high degree of Human Interest, which, in addition to its Human Interest, has in it an added Æsthetic Interest due to the arrangement of some easily recognizable and constantly present concomitant of thought-formulation into a form of æsthetic appeal for which an appreciative Æsthetic Sentiment has been gradually developed in the minds of those who habitually think by means of the language in which the poetry is written." (*Introduction to the Scientific Study of Poetry.*)

References to other definitions and discussions, with brief comments, will be found in Gayley and Scott's *Introduction to the Methods and Materials of Literary Criticism,* vol. i, pp. 279-349.)

A somewhat detailed examination of certain phrases in our definition will help toward its fuller understanding. In the first place, poetry arises from the natural desire of man either to reproduce what he sees and hears, or to express in permanent form what he thinks and feels. This is of course equally true of all the arts. In sculpture and painting, man attempts to give permanent expression to his impressions of the outer world, or to his inner reflections upon it, in forms of *space,* appealing to the eye; in

Poetry as a representative art.

music and poetry, he attempts to do the same thing in forms of *time,* appealing to the ear. It is evident that these arts differ widely among themselves in their particular capacities for accomplishing their purpose. The so-called plastic or formative arts, dealing with objects in space, are peculiarly well fitted to represent the impressions of form and color received from the visible world. No art has been developed so perfectly suited to represent the sounds of the world of nature; partly, no doubt, because no medium has been discovered by which these sounds can be so accurately represented, and partly because they seem not to appeal so strongly to the love of beauty as do colors and forms, or to call for perpetuation in their original condition. So the art of music, while occasionally descriptive of the sounds of the natural world, deals chiefly in sounds developed for itself alone, which are only indirectly symbolic of other experiences; it may be regarded as the art in which man has gone farthest from the mere reproduction of the data of life—the things given him by nature,—and hence, from one standpoint, as the most purely creative of the arts.

From another standpoint, however, poetry is even less purely imitative or reproductive than music. While its sounds relate themselves rather more definitely to remembered experiences than do those of music, they are even more purely symbolic, less directly descriptive, in character. Speech, whose sounds con-

Its use of the sounds of speech.

stitute the sounds of poetry, has marvelously developed the power to suggest not only the experiences of the senses, but those purely abstract and spiritual, most characteristic of human nature, which man has sought to communicate to his fellows in his best and wisest moments. Consider the capacity of poetic speech to convey two different experiences, one of the outer, one of the inner life, in these two passages:

> "The double double double beat
> Of the thundering drum
> Cries, Hark! the foes come."

> "And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; . . .
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

Poetry, therefore, uses speech in two distinct ways: first, merely as rhythmical sound, one of the media of expression in terms of the senses, and secondly, as representative of definite ideas of every possible character, by means of the symbolical significance of language. Because of this double power, it may be regarded as the greatest of the arts.

On the relation of poetry to the other arts, Hegel's discussion is perhaps the most important. The following summary is a translation from the abstract of

his treatment of the subject in the *Æsthetik,* by Bénard, in *La Poétique par W. F. Hegel* (Introduction, p. xxvii): "Above both painting and music appears poetry, the art which expresses itself through speech. Poetry is the real art of the spirit, that which appears actually as spirit. Everything which the intelligence conceives, which it works out in the inner labor of thought,—only speech can include this, express it, and represent it to the imagination. At bottom, therefore, poetry is the richest of all the arts; its domain is limitless. However, what it gains on the side of ideality it loses on the side of the senses. Since it does not address itself to the sense, as is the case with the arts of design, nor to pure sentiment, like music, but undertakes to represent to the imagination spiritual ideas developed by the spirit, the form of expression which it employs does not have the quality of a physical object, where the idea finds the form which is fitted to it. In poetry, *sound,* of all the materials of art the least fitted to the spirit, does not preserve, as in music, an independent value, so that the art has for its essential aim to give it form, and exhausts itself in that task. Here sound must be penetrated by the *idea* which it expresses, it must appear as the mere sign of the thought. But by this very fact, poetry, thanks to this universal means of expression, becomes the universal art. It reproduces in its own domain all the modes of representation which belong to the other arts." In this passage Hegel doubtless underestimates the power of poetry as rhythmical sound, although it is quite true that this element of its form does not have the separate and absolute value which it has in music. A more appreciative account of the capacity of poetry on this side, in its analogy with music, may be found in the

discussion of Theodore Watts (*Encyc. Brit.*). Mr. Watts's summary is as follows: "As compared with sculpture and painting the great infirmity of poetry, as an 'imitation' of nature, is of course that the medium is always and of necessity words—even when no words could, in the dramatic situation, have been spoken. . . . This becomes manifest enough when we compare the Niobe group or the Laocoon group, or the great dramatic paintings of the modern world, with even the finest efforts of dramatic poetry, such as the speech of Andromache to Hector, or the speech of Priam to Achilles, nay such as even the cries of Cassandra in the *Agamemnon*, or the wailings of Lear over the dead Cordelia. Even when writing the words uttered by Œdipus, as the terrible truth breaks in upon his soul, Sophocles must have felt that, in the holiest chambers of sorrow and in the highest agonies of suffering reigns that awful silence which not poetry, but painting sometimes, and sculpture always, can render. . . . It is in giving voice, not to emotion at its tensest, but to the variations of emotion, it is in expressing the countless shifting movements of the soul from passion to passion, that poetry shows in spite of all her infirmities her superiority to the plastic arts. *Hamlet* and the *Agamemnon*, the *Iliad* and the *Œdipus Tyrannus*, are adequate to the entire breadth and depth of man's soul." On the relation of poetry and music see also Combarieu's *Les Rapports de la Musique et de la Poésie.*

Imitation and creation.

It has already appeared that the phrase "representing human experiences" includes very different things both in the word *represent* and in the word *experi-*

ence. The first artistic instinct is merely to reproduce what is seen. Thus Aristotle, the first of the great writers on poetry, said: "Poetry in general seems to have sprung from two causes, each of them lying deep in our nature. First, the instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood, one difference between him and other animals being that he is the most imitative of living creatures; and through imitation he learns his earliest lessons; and no less universal is the pleasure felt in this imitation." (*Poetics,* chap. iv, Butcher's translation.) But man soon goes further than this: he seeks not only to represent what he sees, but to represent imaginary objects which have only been suggested to him by what he sees; not only to record occurrences which he has experienced, but those which he has imagined himself to experience. From this point of view Lord Bacon, one of the earliest writers on the subject in our language, called poetry *feigned history,* and said of it: "The use of this feigned history hath been to give some shadow of satisfaction to the mind of man in those points wherein the nature of things doth deny it—the world being in proportion * inferior to the soul; by reason whereof there is agreeable to the spirit of man a more ample greatness, a more exact goodness, and a more absolute variety than can be found in the nature of things." (*Advancement of Learn-*

* i. e., symmetry or beauty of form.

ing, Book ii.) This new world, greater and more varied than nature, it is the business of poetry to *feign*. Both Aristotle and Bacon were evidently thinking chiefly of poetry dealing with *events*, whether real or imagined (such poetry as we commonly call epic or dramatic); this is characteristic of early criticism. Still another step is therefore necessary: further removed than imagined narratives from the mere imitation of the outer world is that form of poetry best loved in later times, which expresses men's inner experiences,—their hopes, fears, and desires. We must therefore include in the word *represent* both the copying from that which is revealed by the senses, and the depicting of that which has been revealed only to the mind; and in the same way by the *experiences* which are the subject-matter of poetry we must understand not merely those of the physical world but of the spirit.

Representation rather than communication.

Again, it is worth while to inquire why the term *represent* is a more adequate word for our definition than the word "communicate," which is commonly applicable to all forms of human speech. In a sense it is properly applicable to poetry; for poetry, like all forms of art, and perhaps rather more than the plastic arts, represents experiences for others than the artist. Yet if we compare it with other forms of speech, it will be seen that the desire of the poet to *give form* to his material is here much more important,

and the desire to convey his material to his fellows is less important, than that of the speaker or writer of prose. It was this which led John Stuart Mill to go so far as to say, when contrasting poetry with eloquence, that the latter is *heard*, the former *overheard*.

It has long been common to refer to the Aristotelian and Baconian conceptions of poetry as quite different, or even in mutual opposition. Thus Masson, in his interesting essay on "Theories of Poetry," says: "Though it would be possible so to stretch and comment upon Aristotle's theory of poetry as to make it correspond with Bacon's, yet, *prima facie*, the two theories are different, and even antithetical. . . . Aristotle makes the essence of poetry to consist in its being imitative and truthful; Bacon, in its being creative and fantastical. . . . Amid all the discussions of all the critics as to the nature of poetry, this antagonism, if such it is, between the Aristotelian and the Baconian theories, will be found eternally reproducing itself." (pp. 200, 201.) But in fact, while the term "imitation" may be inadequate to express the more idealistic or creative notion of the poet's work, it is probable that Aristotle recognized this as clearly as Bacon, his famous passage on poetry and history (chap. ix), and that on poetry and probability (chap. xxv), being quite consistent with, as they were probably the source of, the remarks of Bacon. So Butcher, in his chapter on 'imitation as an æsthetic term': "The idea of imitation is connected in our minds with a want of creative freedom, with a literal or servile copying: and the word, as transmitted from Plato to Aristotle, was already tinged by some

such disparaging associations. . . . Aristotle, as his manner was, accepted the current phrase and interpreted it anew. . . . A crucial instance of the inadequacy of the literal English equivalent 'imitation' to express the Aristotelian idea is afforded by a passage in ch. xxv. The artist may 'imitate things *as they ought to be*': he may place before him an unrealised ideal." (pp. 121, 122.) Butcher goes on to point out that for Aristotle the subject-matter of poetry was "human life,—its mental processes, its spiritual movements, its outward acts." The sense of inadequacy in the treatment of the subject by both Aristotle and Bacon, as felt by the modern reader, is probably due in great part—as already suggested—to the fact that in our time the predominance of lyrical poetry, with its approach to human life from the subjective standpoint, is in marked contrast to the objective method of the epic and dramatic forms which dominated both the classical and the Elizabethan periods.

Universality.

The definition further limits the material of poetry by the phrase, "in so far as they are of lasting or universal interest." This limitation again is not peculiar to poetry, but is characteristic of poetry as literature, and of literature as art. Art takes the materials of human experience from every quarter, but rejects those which are purely personal or temporary, and works with those elements which—sometimes for subtle or even mysterious reasons—are of universal significance. In an art gallery one may often see a painting named simply "Portrait of a Lady." To the lady's friends it would be of interest to know

that it is the picture of Mrs. John Smith; to the biographer or the historian the same question would occur; but to the artist her name is a matter of indifference. Her face is to be perpetuated in so far as it can be made to appeal to the interests of human nature a thousand years hence, when her personality has long ceased to be of account to any one on the earth. It is so with poetry. "Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead," writes Browning. This might be neighborhood gossip, or a statement in the daily newspaper—one of local and temporary interest. But Browning's Evelyn Hope is not a person of local and temporary interest; her death will awaken sadness as long as the English language is spoken, because it is the universal and permanent appeal lying within it, which a poet has perpetuated. This limitation, then, is a necessary point of distinction between the record of facts and *literature*. I may have an experience which moves me deeply; I may record it in words; but this is not enough. If I have not presented that aspect of it which is of lasting interest to other human souls, the result has merely relieved my feelings—it has not become a work of art. It may be written in verse, but it is not poetry. In the work of such poets as Mr. Rudyard Kipling, arising from contemporary incidents in politics, commerce, and war, one should seek to distinguish carefully (though the line may of course be a disputed one) between the good journalistic verse, on themes of essentially temporary significance, and

the real poems which—though they may take some trifling incident as a point of departure,—open up universal themes and may be presumed to have long life before them.

To some it will perhaps seem that any expression of genuine human experience has the elements of universal interest, and it will already have occurred to the thoughtful student that the limitation just discussed is in part opposed to the Wordsworthian theory of poetry. Wordsworth held that poetry, "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," if it deals with essential human emotions, ought to awaken similar emotions in every open-hearted reader, and so become enduringly vital. But while this general principle has won acceptance, it remains true that those poems of Wordsworth's dealing with personal experiences difficult to make of universal interest, have least of the poetical element, and survive rather as literary curiosities than otherwise. Of this the poem called *The Idiot Boy* is an interesting example (see Wordsworth's defense of it, in a letter to John Wilson, Knight's *Life*, i. 398-405). To the poet himself idiots did not seem repulsive; on the contrary he told his correspondent that he often applied to them, in his own mind, "that sublime expression of Scripture that 'their life is hidden with God.'" He therefore wrote the poem descriptive of the idiot boy "with exceeding delight and pleasure," and believed that a reader not hindered by a false standard of taste should and would share his pleasure. Experience has proved that this was rather an idiosyncrasy of the poet than a universal human element. Other examples might easily be added, but this aspect of the subject belongs rather to the consideration of poetical themes, and of

the place of beauty in poetry (see chap. iii). It may be noted here as significant that certain highly egoistical poets, whose themes are sometimes of questionably universal interest, such as Walt Whitman and the late W. E. Henley, tend to adopt metrical forms different from those developed by natural literary evolution for the expression of poetical ideas. On this point see chap. iv, and especially the remark of Courthope on Whitman's poetry, cited on p. 348.

The qualification next to be noted is that of *metrical* language. That the language of poetry must be metrical is not universally accepted, and it is just here that the vagueness of the common use of the word is chiefly noticeable. Vulgar usage includes in poetry all writings in verse form; critical usage, discarding much that is not metrical, often includes writings which are poetical in theme or style, though in prose form. The one class has in mind the circle of metrical literature; the other the circle of imaginative literature.* These two circles intersect,

Metrical form.

* Some writers, like Shelley and Ruskin, even use Poetry as a vague term for any creative art. Coleridge, in his first essay "On the Principles of Genial Criticism" (1814), said: "All the fine arts are different species of poetry," and divided them into "poetry of language (poetry in the emphatic sense, because less subject to the accidents and limitations of time and space); poetry of the ear, or music; and poetry of the eye, which is again subdivided into plastic poetry, or statuary, and graphic poetry, or painting." Later, in the essay "On Poesy or Art" (1818?) he proposed to use 'poesy' as the generic or common term, and to distinguish that species of poesy which is not *muta poesis* by its usual name 'poetry.'"

and careful usage restricts the term poetry to the territory common to both: that is, the writings which are both imaginative in character and metrical in form. On the external side, then, we should think of poetry first of all as *rhythmical sound,*— one of the rhythmical arts, as Aristotle classified it long ago; its sounds being represented by printed words just as music is represented by printed notes, but really existing in *time,* not space, and for the ear. Why it is that literature of a poetical character—that is, literature appealing to the emotions by means of the imagination—is commonly in metrical form, and whether we can explain this as not an incidental or accidental connection, but one essential to the nature of poetry, are questions which will be considered in chapter iv. In that connection also we shall see why it is not sufficient to say, as is often said, that poetry is in *rhythmical* form; namely, because this would be equally true of a large part of literary prose.

The contrary view, that metre is not a necessary element of the form of poetry, has of course good authority behind it. Not to go further, Sidney and Shelley, writers of the two great "Defenses" of poetry in our language, take this position. "It is not riming and versing that maketh a poet," said Sidney, "no more than a long gown maketh an advocate. . . . One may be a poet without versing, and a versifier without poetry." And Shelley: "The distinction between poets and prose writers is a vulgar error.

. . . Plato was essentially a poet. . . . Lord Bacon was a poet." Yet both these writers admit that in actual usage the quality of rhythm at least, if not metre, is almost universal. "The senate of poets," says Sidney, "hath chosen verse as their fittest raiment;" and Shelley tells us that "the language of poets has ever affected a certain uniform and harmonious recurrence of sound, without which it were not poetry, and which is scarcely less indispensable to the communication of its influence than the words themselves." The position of Aristotle on this matter is ambiguous. As Butcher observes, the obvious implication of one passage (in *Poetics,* chap. i), is "that the meaning of the word 'poet' should be widened so as to include any writer, either in prose or verse, whose work is an 'imitation' within the æsthetic meaning of the term." (p. 142.) On the other hand, as we have seen, he treats poetry as one of the three rhythmical arts, and finds its second principal source in the universal instinct for harmony and rhythm. The tendency of modern criticism has been more and more toward emphasizing this element as fundamental. It is sufficient here to refer the student to Professor Gummere's chapter on "Rhythm as the Essential Fact of Poetry," in *The Beginnings of Poetry,* and to the article on Poetry in the *Encyclopedia Britannica,* by Mr. Theodore Watts, who says: "The theory that versification is not an indispensable requisite of a poem seems to have become nearly obsolete in our time. Perhaps, indeed, many critics would now go so far in the contrary direction as to say with Hegel that 'metre is the first and only condition absolutely demanded by poetry.'"

We now reach the qualification "with chief ref-

erence to the emotions." Here the emotions are in contrast with the reason,—an aspect of poetry which Coleridge had in mind when he said that the proper opposite of poetry is not prose, but science.* Prose literature ordinarily makes its primary appeal to the reason, adding the materials of intelligent thinking one to the other, with clearness and coherence as its essential qualities. Emotional appeal is, of course, not excluded from the field of the prose writer; but it is properly subordinate, and whenever it looms too large the reader is likely to feel that the region of poetry is being intruded upon. The poet, on the other hand, although he too may appeal to the intelligence of his reader, seeks his point of contact with some possible emotion which will correspond with the emotion dominating his own theme; and the reason will only assist in developing this emotional appeal, as the emotions may in the other case assist in developing an appeal to the reason. In different types of poetry, and in the work of different poets, these contrasted elements will of course show very different proportional importance, and oftentimes—we may even say usually—a great poem is marked by the presentation of a great idea. Yet its char-

Emotional appeal.

* "The common essence of all [the forms of poetry or art] consists in the excitement of emotion for the immediate purpose of pleasure through the medium of beauty; herein contra-distinguishing poetry from science, the immediate object and primary purpose of which is truth and possible utility." (Preliminary Essay "On the Principles of Genial Criticism concerning the Fine Arts.")

acteristic quality will nevertheless be the fusion of this idea with an utterance of joy, sorrow, love, pity, or fear, by means of which it will find lodgment in the reader's mind, fused there also with the corresponding emotion.

Closely connected with this emotional element is the last of the qualifications of our definition, "by means of the imagination." In common life and in art alike, it is the emotions which set the imagination in motion, and, *vice versa*, the language of the imagination which stirs the emotions. The processes which we call imaginative are opposed to the processes of reason, just as we saw that the appeal to the emotions is in contrast with the appeal to the reason. In particular, the imaginative processes treat facts, the data of experience, in a way totally different from the processes of which the reason avails itself, discarding experiences which the reason values, utilizing experiences which the reason discards, and meaning by "truth" something quite different from the truth of science. The poet may, on the one hand, discard history for that "feigned history," as Bacon called it, depicting "a more ample greatness, a more exact goodness, and a more absolute variety than can be found in the nature of things;" or, on the other hand, he may take familiar realities, and seek to show forth different meanings, which he has seen within them by qualities of his own. Either process is included in what we call Imagina-

Imaginative element.

tion, the former being the meaning usually attached to the word by earlier writers, the latter that chiefly emphasized by writers since the time of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Thus Shakspere described the more elementary aspect of the imagination in the well-known passage, playful yet philosophical, in which he made one of his characters place the poet with the lunatic and the lover.

"The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact:
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,
That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."
(*Midsummer Night's Dream,* v, i.)

The poet, then, is like the lunatic in discarding the ordinary facts of life for those which impress him with vividness, though they do not bear the tests of science; he is like the lover in being swept along by emotion, and (again) in seeing under its guidance what those in more commonplace moods cannot see. All three exhibit the "imagination" of the type emphasized in the earlier use of the

word, the feigning of *visible* experiences. For the "imagination" of the other type we may best go to some such passage as this from Wordsworth:

"If thou partake the animating faith
That poets, even as prophets, each with each
Connected in a mighty scheme of truth,
Have each his own peculiar faculty,
Heaven's gift, a sense that fits him to perceive
Objects unseen before, thou wilt not blame
The humblest of this band who dares to hope
That unto him hath also been vouchsafed
An insight that in some sort he possesses,
A privilege whereby a work of his,
Proceeding from a source of untaught things,
Creative and enduring, may become
A power like one of Nature's."

(*Prelude,* Book xiii.)

Here the poet is likened, not to those carried away by visionary experiences which feign those of common life, but to the prophet, who has been given a divine "insight" by which he perceives "objects unseen before" in their relation to the whole "mighty scheme of truth." This "insight" is the second type of poetic imagination. (The whole matter of the imagination in poetry is reserved for full discussion in chapter iii.)

Is poetry ever chiefly reasonable?

This interpretation of poetry as appealing to the emotions by means of the imagination is so fundamental a matter that for many critics it is the substance of the

definition. Thus Shelley says: "Poetry, in a general sense, may be defined to be 'the expression of the imagination;'" and Theodore Watts: "No literary expression can, properly speaking, be called poetry that is not in a certain deep sense emotional." Why, then, was the modifying word *usually* admitted into our definition? Merely to make place for certain types of literature in verse, which otherwise it would be exceedingly difficult to classify. Sometimes human experiences, which may be regarded as of lasting or universal interest, are expressed in metrical language and with artistic form and finish, yet without chief reference to the emotions and by the processes of reason rather than of the imagination. Literature of this doubtful type is particularly likely to be found among the writings dating from the latter half of the seventeenth and the former half of the eighteenth centuries, and in that period they were unquestioningly classed as poetry. Examples are Dryden's *Religio Laici,* an essay in verse on the subject of the Church of England, Pope's *Essay on Criticism,* a literary essay in verse, and Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination,* an essay on what we should now call general æsthetics. For such essays, according to the prevalent standards of later criticism, the prose form would be more appropriate; yet it cannot be denied that the verse form in which they are written gives a certain sense of artistic finish or completeness and—for some readers, at

least—adds to the pleasure they are capable of producing. If not poetry, then, what are they to be called? Analogous with this problem is that of certain literary types in prose form, found in such writers as De Quincey and Ruskin, which in emotional appeal and imaginative method seem to enter the region of poetry and almost to demand metrical form. Both these types lie along the borders of the region where the circle of imaginative literature intersects the circle of literature in verse, and tempt us to blur the boundaries of our definition for the sake of convenience in literary description.

A similar problem is raised by certain recognized literary types, like oratory and the prose romance, which are normally in prose, yet make such large use of imaginative methods and emotional appeal as to introduce a confusing element into the definition of poetry. In the case of the prose romance discrimination along this line is exceedingly difficult. Between the *Morte Arthur* of Malory and Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, Lodge's *Rosalynde* and Shakspere's *As you Like It*, Scott's *Ivanhoe* and *Marmion*, there is no obvious difference of type save the superficial one of metrical form. Whether the use of the prose form for such imaginative methods has justified itself as fully as the use of verse, is a related question which cannot here be discussed. It must suffice to note that primitive imaginative literature is nearly always in verse, and the earlier critics had no such difficulty in fixing the limits of the term "poetry" as besets those writing after the remarkable widening of the field of

prose. For Aristotle, for example, poetry and fiction are very nearly synonymous terms.

Less difficult, on the whole, is the related question of the relation of poetry and oratory. Although their emotional level seems often much the same, we may safely recur to the fundamental distinction that prose moves on the ground of fact and by the method of reason, and when oratory ceases to do this, it trespasses on the field of poetry. The distinction is well brought out by a brilliant figure of Hazlitt's, when he says that Burke's style is "that which went nearest to the verge of poetry, and yet never fell over. . . . It differs from poetry, as I conceive, like the chamois from the eagle: it climbs to an almost equal height, touches upon a cloud, overlooks a precipice, is picturesque, sublime—but all the while, instead of soaring through the air, it stands upon a rocky cliff, clambers up by abrupt and intricate ways. . . . The principle which guides his pen is truth, not beauty." (Essay on "The Prose Style of Poets." Works, 1903 ed., vol. vii, p. 10.) A different answer to the question is proposed by John Stuart Mill, in his "Thoughts on Poetry and its Varieties." He finds the distinction between poetry and eloquence in the fact that only the latter supposes an audience. "We should say that eloquence is *heard;* poetry is *over*heard. . . . When the act of utterance is not itself the end, but a means to an end,— . . . when the expression of his emotions . . . is tinged also by that purpose, by that desire of making an impression upon another mind,— then it ceases to be poetry, and becomes eloquence." (*Dissertations and Discussions*, 1882 ed., vol. i, pp. 97, 98.) While this is a suggestive passage, Mill's distinction seems too much based upon lyrical poetry, and that of the more modern subjective sort. Primitive

poetry, particularly of the narrative kind, very generally presupposes an audience,—a fact illustrated by the introductory "Lordings," and similar phrases of address, characteristic of early epic and ballad.

A very interesting and more careful working out of the same sort of differentiation is that of Professor F. N. Scott, in an article on "The Most Fundamental Differentia of Poetry and Prose," in the *Publications* of the Modern Language Association, vol. xix, p. 250. Professor Scott draws the fundamental line between literature which may be termed "expression for communication's sake" and that which may be termed "communication for expression's sake." If the desire to express, rather than to communicate, is predominant, the type is that of poetry. (Compare the remarks on page 10 above.) In support of this distinction, Shelley is cited, saying: "A poet is a nightingale, who sits in darkness and sings to cheer its own solitude with sweet sounds," and Mrs. Browning:

> "What the poet writes,
> He writes; mankind accepts it if it suits."

Further from Mr. Scott: "Anyone who has written verse knows how fatal to the versifying mood it is to let the mind wander to anticipated readers, and busy itself with their hypothetical needs and desires. . . . In writing prose, however, the case is just the opposite." "Prose-poetry results when a writer adhering to the traditional medium of communication—the forms invested by long use with communicative associations—becomes interested mainly in expression."

Finally, the student is referred to a valuable discussion of the difference between poetry and prose in Masson's essay on "Prose and Verse" (reprinted

in *Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, and Other Essays*). His summary is as follows: "That in the whole vast field of the speculative and didactic, prose is the legitimate monarch, receiving verse but as a visitor and guest, who will carry back bits of rich ore and other specimens of the land's produce; that in the great business of record, also, prose is pre-eminent, verse but voluntarily assisting; that in the expression of passion, and the work of moral stimulation, verse and prose meet as co-equals, prose undertaking the rougher and harder duty, where passion intermingles with the storm of current doctrine, and with the play and conflict of social interests—sometimes, when thus engaged, bursting forth into such strains of irregular music that verse takes up the echo and prolongs it in measured modulation, leaving prose rapt and listening to hear itself outdone; and lastly, that in the noble realm of poetry or imagination prose also is capable of all exquisite, beautiful, powerful, and magnificent effects, but that, by reason of a greater ease with fancies when they come in crowds, and of a greater range and arbitrariness of combination, verse here moves with the more royal gait. And thus Prose and Verse are presented as two circles or spheres, not entirely separate, as some would make them, but intersecting and interpenetrating through a large portion of both their bulks, and disconnected only in two crescents outstanding at the right and left." (1875 ed., pp. 289, 290.)

Origins of poetry.

In general, to define any matter includes some consideration of its origins; but as it is necessary to exclude from the present book the historical study of poetry, and as its origins are involved in the uncertainties of pre-

historic ages, this aspect of the introductory definition must be passed over very briefly. In general, while there is still much disagreement as to the most primitive forms of poetry, and their relation to the other arts, two things seem fairly certain: first, that poetry is the earliest form of literary art, and second, that in its origins it was connected inseparably with the other rhythmical arts—music, song, and the dance. For a long time it remained the accepted form for the expression of all artistic or imaginative utterances in language,—for a considerable time, indeed, the accepted form for whatever was thought memorable, or worthy of being handed down from one generation to another. Later the capacities of prose for permanent, and still later for artistic, expression narrowed the field of poetry. Again, primitive man expressed his emotions by a composite art which gradually divided and has gone on dividing into the now widely divergent arts of poetry, vocal and instrumental music, and dancing. One may still see the original conditions preserved in Indian ceremonials, for which the medicine-man of the tribe will compose what is at once a poetic ritual, a song and chorus, and a dance, the symbolical meaning of all which, for the purpose of expressing some great tribal emotion, will be instantly evident to his associates. Such a medicine-man said to a visitor,*

* Mrs. Mary Austin, by whose kind permission the incident is cited from a still unpublished essay.

in discussing the difference between his art and that of the white man: "White man's poetry no good: it talks too much." That is to say, the white man's poetry was to him a mass of words, lacking in that complex and symbolic power of conveying emotion which his native art possessed. As civilization has advanced, the more intellectual aspects of this original combined art, such as poetry and harmonic music, have been very highly developed according to their separate possibilities; while the less intellectual, vocal music and the dance, have declined in power, the latter even passing altogether from the group of the fine arts.

Communal character of early poetry.

Further,—although here there is somewhat less agreement than in the case of the matters just discussed,—it seems fairly well established that poetry arose from the social or communal expression of emotions held in common by primitive groups of men, and only by degrees came to be a means of expression of the feelings and ideas of individuals. This communal aspect of poetry may also be seen very clearly in surviving bodies of primitive man; the tribe as a whole speaks through its poetry, whether for worship, war, or the chase. Among the earliest poetic creations of almost every people are verses designed to serve as charms against evil, as propitiations of divine beings, as expressions of the joy of the mass of men in some common occupation (hunting, planting, fighting), or of the emotions experienced

at moments when marriage or death brings them together for some common ritual. Individual artists of course contribute to the development of this poetry, and lead their fellows in uttering it; but it is, in a very real way, the voice of the people as a whole. The history of later poetry has been the history of the development of individual expression. "Song, once the consolation and expression of the festal crowd, comes to be the consolation and expression of the solitary poet." (*Beginnings of Poetry*, p. 140.) In the narrative poems of Scott, as Professor Gummere points out so suggestively, we have the latest expression of the communal ballad spirit in modern poetry; on the other hand, he finds in Keats's words,

> "On the shore
> Of the wide world I stand alone and think,"

the "modern lyric attitude in contrast with a singing and dancing throng." (p. 157.) Along with this development there has of course come an elaborate development of consciously artistic poetical forms, in contrast with the simplicity and restrictive conventionality of earlier poetry. Finally, as has been suggested in an earlier paragraph, it is evident that poetry (like other forms of literature) has all the time turned more and more from the representation of the external or objective experiences of man, to the inner life—the experiences of his spirit.

The best account of primitive poetry is that of Professor Gummere, discussed with elaboration and a wealth of learning in *The Beginnings of Poetry,* and, in more popular form, in *The Popular Ballad.* On the union of the rhythmical arts, persisting throughout the classical Greek period, see Butcher's *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art,* pp. 138-140. "The intimate fusion of the three arts . . . was exhibited even in the person of the artist. The office of the poet as teacher of the chorus demanded a practical knowledge of all that passed under the term 'dancing,' including steps, gestures, attitudes, and the varied resources of rhythmical movement. . . . The poet, lyric or dramatic, composed the accompaniment as well as wrote the verses; and it was made a reproach against Euripides, who was the first to deviate from the established usage, that he sought the aid of Iophon, son of Sophocles, in the musical setting of his dramas."

CHAPTER II.

THE CLASSES OR KINDS.

To classify the forms of poetry by any single adequate system may be said to be impossible, since there are so many standpoints from which such a classification may be undertaken. One may, for example, classify by subject-matter: poems dealing with external nature, with man and his emotions, with man and his deeds, with God and the world of spirit. Or, as Wordsworth did with his poems, according to that poetical faculty which they chiefly exhibit: poems of Fancy, of Imagination, of the Affections, of Sentiment and Reflection. Or, again, one may classify according to metrical form, which in many cases gives also a clue to the real character of a poem, as in the cases of the ballade, sonnet, or ode.

Methods of classification.

But the most familiar, and probably the most useful, method is to classify poems according to the point of view of the poet in relation to his material. If he stands outside it, representing something experienced in

The principal types: Epic, Lyric, Dramatic.

the world beyond himself, by what is often called the "objective" method, the result is narrative or *epic* poetry. If he speaks for himself, setting forth inner experiences (not necessarily his own in fact, but made his own for the time being) by the "subjective" method, the result is *lyrical* poetry. If he combines these two methods, presenting an action objectively, but doing so in the words and through the emotional experiences of the actors, the result is *dramatic* poetry. This is the classification used by the ancient Greeks, whose tact, as Matthew Arnold observes, "in matters of this kind was infallible;" and, while it is not adapted absolutely without question to the whole body of modern poetry, it is the division of the subject which modern criticism has generally preferred.

The explanation of the three classes of poetry, as here given, is substantially Hegel's. No complete exposition of the matter has come down to us from ancient times, Aristotle's work being notoriously deficient on the side of lyrical poetry. The origin of the threefold division, however, was doubtless purely natural rather than philosophical. The epic was the popular poetry of recital; the lyric (or "melic") was song-poetry, intended for use by an individual singer with accompaniment, while from this were distinguished the elegiac and choral lyrics (as we now should call them), rather by their metrical form and manner of delivery than by any deeper considerations; the drama was of course quite distinct (although involving the choral lyric) for the same reason. Here as

elsewhere the instinct to classify philosophically is a modern development.

So-called descriptive poetry.

Certain minor groups of poetry, not easily conforming to these three, were however recognized by the ancients; and as the development of the art has gone on still other types have arisen which can with difficulty be placed wholly within the limits of any of the groups. A group called "descriptive" poetry is recognized by some writers, including poetry devoted to the portrayal of external objects as distinguished from the narrative of events. In fact, however, description, in verse as in prose, is almost invariably used not for its own sake but as incidental to some larger purpose. So-called descriptive poetry is very commonly lyrical, expressing the feeling of the poet for the object or scene in question, rather than attempting merely to represent it. A good example is Wordsworth's Sonnet on *Westminster Bridge,* beginning

"Earth has not anything to show more fair,"

and ending

"Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!"

This is purely descriptive, yet such a line as

"Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep"

gives a clue—if a clue were needed—to the fact that it is really the feeling of the poet which forms the substance of the poem. There is, however, a class of descriptive poetry which is rather to be grouped with the epic, not only because it deals with nature from the objective standpoint, but because it follows something of the method of narrative poetry, moving through space, and perhaps even through time, to accomplish its purpose. We shall therefore consider this group of poems, of which Thomson's *Seasons* is a conspicuous example, under the head of the epic.

Still other poems present deliberate combinations of two types of composition, as is suggested by the names chosen by Wordsworth and Browning, respectively, for certain poems very characteristic of their artistic methods: "Lyrical Ballads," on the one hand, "Dramatic Lyrics" on the other. By a lyrical ballad Wordsworth meant a poem which in form was narrative, but in which, as he said, the feeling developed "gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling." There is a sense in which this might be said to be true of any great narrative poem, since its source of power is the emotion aroused by the poet in the telling of the story; but Wordsworth went further, and had in mind a type of poetry whose narrative form is merely a convenient means to express some feeling of the poet himself.

Combinations of types: lyrical ballad.

Of this type are such poems as *The Two April Mornings, Lucy Gray, The Sailor's Mother, The Last of the Flock,* and *Beggars,* in each of which a trifling incident is related and left to communicate its own lyrical impression. The same term, "lyrical ballad," is also conveniently applied to narrative poems of a different type, like Drayton's ode on the battle of Agincourt, or Tennyson's on the *Charge of the Light Brigade,*—poems which tell a story, but only for the purpose of arousing feeling.

Browning's "dramatic lyrics," on the other hand, were, as he said, "though often lyric in expression, always dramatic in principle, and so many utterances of so many imaginary persons, not mine." That is to say, the purpose of the poet in this type is to present a situation, and not infrequently a certain amount of action, through the words of the characters concerned. Great examples of Browning's dramatic lyrics are *The Confessional, Two in the Campagna,* and (though he did not include these others under the same caption) *Fra Lippo Lippi, Andrea del Sarto,* and *Abt Vogler.* Tennyson adopted a similar form in *Ulysses, Tithonus, Rizpah, The Grandmother,* and other poems. A striking example in recent American literature is Mr. W. V. Moody's *The Menagerie.* Mr. Rudyard Kipling, in many of his poems dealing with the soldiers of the British army (*Danny Deever* is perhaps the most notable example), has developed a

Dramatic lyric.

type of mingled narrative and lyrical expression to which one might give either the name of lyrical ballad or dramatic lyric, according to the standpoint taken.

Other combinations.

The different types are also found in combination in poems developed on a more elaborate scale. Thus Browning's *Ring and the Book* is a kind of huge expansion of the type already illustrated from his shorter poems; here, through a series of ten great dramatic lyrics, he tells the same story from the standpoint of each several character involved in the action. Again, a number of pure lyrics, representative of a single character, are sometimes set together to tell a story in what is really dramatic form. This type (called a "monodrama," or drama with a single actor) appears in Tennyson's *Maud* and Browning's *James Lee's Wife.*

So-called reflective poetry.

There remain to be considered certain doubtful groups or classes, which are sometimes attached to one or another of our three principal kinds, and sometimes given subordinate places by themselves. A class is occasionally made of poems called reflective or philosophical. This type of poetry, which ordinarily arises only in highly developed and self-conscious times, is furthest removed from the primitive impulse to deal with the simple data of human experience. Usually, according to the form and method of each example, it may be considered as a

development of either the lyric or the epic. Sometimes the effort of the poet is to expound human life, or the relation of man to the universe, in partly narrative form, or at any rate by the progressive method of the epic; examples of this character are Cowper's *Task,* Wordsworth's *Excursion,* Browning's *Fifine at the Fair,* and (in smaller compass) Tennyson's *Lucretius.* Again, the poet may do the same thing in his own person, or through the imagined voice of another, by the method of the lyric; examples of this character are Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey,* Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra,* and Tennyson's *St. Simeon Stylites. In Memoriam* is an instance of the grouping of lyrics for reflective or philosophical ends, as in *Maud* they are grouped for more dramatic ends. Even the dramatic form, in a profoundly reflective poet like Browning, may become the vehicle for poetry of this order.

So-called didactic poetry.

Very closely connected with so-called "reflective" poetry is that sometimes given a separate class under the caption "didactic." This term, literally meaning "teaching," is a troublesome and ambiguous one as applied to poetry. In a sense most good poetry teaches (is, in Arnold's words, a "criticism of life"); and when we have excluded that in which the teaching is wholly veiled or incidental, there remains very much which amounts to the explicit communication of truth. Let the reader consider these three passages:

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The soul that rises in us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar."

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

"The quality of mercy is not strained.
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

All three are absolutely didactic, literally speaking, and yet are from three great imaginative poems. One is from a lyric of the ode type, another from a narrative in ballad form, the third from a romantic drama. The presentation of truth, then, even in direct form, may be an element in a poem of any type; and in any case to classify a poem by the purpose of the poet would be inadequate. There is, however, a class of poems, already considered in chapter i, which deal primarily with the presentation of truth, and in doing so follow the processes of the reason rather than of the imagination; they border, therefore, on the field of the prose essay, and cannot readily be associated with lyric, epic, or drama. When Dryden sets forth the proofs of the divine origin of the Bible in a passage such as this,—

"If on the book itself we cast our view,
Concurrent heathens prove the story true:
The doctrine, miracles; which must convince,
For Heaven in them appeals to human sense;
And though they prove not, they confirm the cause,
When what is taught agrees with Nature's laws,"—*

we may call his method didactic in a narrower sense than in the case of the passages quoted a moment ago. And Wordsworth, despite his usual reliance on the methods of the imagination, occasionally gives us such passages as that against which Matthew Arnold protested:

"This imperial realm,
While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
An obligation, on her part, to teach
Them who are born to serve her and obey;
Binding herself by statute to secure,
For all the children whom her soil maintains,
The rudiments of letters, and inform
The mind with moral and religious truth."
(*The Excursion,* Book ix.)

Of the same type is some of the poetry of Pope, much of that of Young and his contemporaries, and not a little of that of Cowper. If this group is properly admitted to be within the bounds of poetry, for reasons suggested in chapter i, it seems necessary to classify it separately; *expository* or *essay*

* *Religio Laici*, 146–151.

poetry would perhaps be a more satisfactory caption than "didactic."

Satiric poetry may also be regarded as on the border-line of the poetic realm; and since the word "satire" properly describes not a form so much as a spirit or a mode of utterance, it is inaccurate to use it as the name of a poetic type. The importance of certain great verse satires, however, notably those of Dryden, Pope, and Byron, has led to the doubtful recognition of this group as a separate class of poetry. In reality, satiric poems will be found to fall ordinarily into the expository class just considered; unless, indeed, they take one of the more standard forms, such as the epic (exemplified in Pope's *Dunciad*) or the lyric (exemplified in Burns's *Louse on a Lady's Bonnet*).

Satiric poetry.

Another term formerly, but erroneously, applied as indicating a separate poetical class is the *pastoral*. This sort of poetry, dealing originally with the realities of the life of herdsmen, shepherds, and other country folk, and later with the conventionalized life of the traditional "Golden Age," was exceedingly popular during the period of classical imitation between the latter part of the sixteenth and the middle of the eighteenth centuries; and from that period date a number of treatises dealing with it as one of the leading poetical types. We can now see, not only that for genuine human emotions such an artificial

Pastoral poetry.

form has questionable value, but that "pastoral" is at any rate a term relating to subject-matter or style, and applicable to any of the principal types. We may have a pastoral idyl (as Tennyson's *Dora*), a pastoral elegy (as Milton's *Lycidas*), a pastoral drama (as Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*), or expository poetry of didactic or satiric quality under the guise of pastoral description (as in several of the poems in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*). In modern times the life of the humbler class of society is even more often than formerly the theme of poetry, but it is the essentially human elements in it *—not the accidental environment—which furnish the poetical theme.

Let us now turn to a more detailed consideration of the three principal kinds of poetry.

A.—The Epic.

Epic poetry is a term used in two different ways: first, as including all strictly narrative poetry, dealing objectively, as we have seen, with human experiences;† secondly, as describing the most important single form of narrative poetry, the epic proper, or *epopee*.

Two meanings of "epic."

* As, for example, in Wordsworth's *Michael*, which he called "a pastoral poem."

† The etymology of the term connects it with *word*, and is perhaps due to a discrimination between poetry to be *spoken* or recited and that to be *sung*.

Of the epic in this narrower or stricter sense an admirable definition is given by Professor Gayley: "a dispassionate recital in dignified rhythmic narrative of a momentous theme or action fulfilled by heroic characters and supernatural agencies under the control of a sovereign destiny." (Intro. to *The Principles of Poetry,* p. xciv.) This is the type of poetry which in ancient times was believed to be greatest, not only because the epics of Homer were in every one's mind as the greatest achievements of poetry known to man, but because these epics were so expressive of the noblest elements in national life. And this is the most striking characteristic of the early epic: the fact that it expresses the lore and the emotions of a whole people, rather than of an individual. Thus Hegel says: "Its basis and form are determined by the totality of the beliefs and ideas of a people;" its subject is some past action which "includes the whole life of a nation and the history of an epoch." Such epics as we are here considering originally *grew,* rather than were composed in the modern sense. They arose in the age of wandering singers, like the Homer of Greek tradition, or the *scop* (minstrel-poet) of Anglo-Saxon lore, who went about repeating—now to king and courtiers, now to more humble assemblies—the stories of the heroes, both human and super-human, in whom all had an interest. At length there came a time when some

The national epic.

single artistic poet arose, with more capacity for giving form to his materials than his predecessors, and gave the accumulated epic materials their finished shape. This is assumed to have been the history of the *Iliad,* the national epic of the Greeks; of the *Song of Roland,* the epic of early France; of *Beowulf,* the epic of early England.

It is evident, then, that we may roughly divide these epics into two groups: those which, in the form we have them, represent the development of a long period of communal composition and of national tradition, and whose individual authorship is either unknown or of comparatively slight importance, and those which—though dealing also with national traditions—are the product of conscious individual art, the work distinctively of a single poet. Of the former class are the three epics mentioned in the previous paragraph; also the *Mahabharata,* the epic of India; the *Kalevala,* the epic of Iceland; the *Niebelungenlied,* the epic of ancient Germany; and the *Cid,* the epic of Spain. In the second class some would place the *Odyssey,* since although, like the *Iliad,* it is based on traditional national lore, it shows more unity and conscious artistic form; the *Æneid,* which was the result of the conscious effort of Vergil to give his people a national epic; the *Jerusalem Delivered* of Tasso, the effort of an Italian poet to give his race an epic, founded not on a national theme but on the conquest of the world

Communal and individual types of epic.

by Christianity; and the *Paradise Lost* of Milton, the similar effort of an Englishman to form an epic poem on the theme of the creation and fall of man.

All these poems, differing in so many particulars, are alike in the matters suggested by our definition.

Epic qualities.

They are all impersonal or objective: the poet and his own emotions appear very slightly, if at all. They all deal with some great action, whose greatness is familiar through tradition and is concentrated in some single heroic figure; they all include not only the deeds of man, but supernatural occurrences and mythical or divine characters,—in some cases because these were universally believed in at the time of the poet's writing, in other cases because they had become a part of the epic story, and lent it dignity and completeness. In all cases they appeal either to national ideals, or to ideals which have taken their place in some measure,—like that of the worldly empire of Christ, as in the case of Tasso, or the spiritual government of God, as in the case of Milton. When one considers the dignity of theme, the lofty style and magnitude of action, characteristic of these poems, it is no wonder that for many centuries it was held that epic (or, as it came to be called, "heroic") poetry was the highest achievement of the poetic art.

The best authorities on the epic are Aristotle's *Poetics,* chapters xxiii and xxiv; the treatise of Le

Bossu, who in 1675 formulated the doctrines of classical criticism on the subject; the discussion of Dryden in the Preface to his *Virgil;* the discussion of Hegel (represented in Bénard's work, already cited); the article on Poetry in the *Encyclopedia Britannica,* by Theodore Watts; that on the Epic in the *Universal Encyclopedia* by Professor A. R. Marsh; Ker's *Epic and Romance;* and Clark's *History of Epic Poetry.* Aristotle's definition of the epic is characteristic of the very simple conception of the form prevalent in his time: it is distinguished from the drama by being "narrative in form and employing a single metre." This unity of metrical form has been characteristic almost throughout its history in every language, and is of course due to the sense of unity and continuity necessary for the success of an elaborate story. Aristotle's principal rule for the structure is also fundamental: the subject must be "a single action, whole and complete, with a beginning, a middle, and an end." The objective standpoint is also clearly indicated, in the rule that the poet should speak as little as possible in his own person. Le Bossu's definition of the epic shows the falsely didactic view of poetry assumed in the neo-classical period: "a discourse invented by art, to form the manners by such instructions as are disguised under the allegories of some one important action, which is related in verse, after a probable, diverting, and surprising manner." (English translation of 1695.) On the structure, Le Bossu tells us that the conflict necessary for developing the action is found in the endeavors of the hero for accomplishing his design, and the endeavors of those against it; these, with the successful solution, form the beginning, middle, and end demanded by Aristotle. Another interesting

suggestion is that the length of the action of the epic, in contrast with the tragedy, makes necessary its less violent action and its happy termination. Hegel's discussion is of chief interest for its emphasis on the national spirit. It is necessary, he observes, that the epic poet should live in the very ideas and beliefs which form the substance of his age; if this affinity between the spirit of his time and the event described does not exist, his poem as an epic will be incongruous,—a consideration full of suggestiveness in connection with such modern attempts at revived epic as those of Southey. Hegel's remarks on the difference between the action of epic and tragedy are also of interest: in the drama, external circumstances have an importance dependent on the way in which they exhibit the will and passions of the actors, while in the epic, external circumstances are equally important with the interior will, and even the more inward action resembles an external pageant passing before the eyes. In other words, the drama presents individual rights, though perhaps in conflict with necessity; the epic shows individual action swallowed up in the universal dominion of necessity. Finally, we should notice Hegel's famous remark in illustration of the difference between the objective character of the epic and the subjective character of the lyric: that we are ignorant of, and comparatively indifferent to, the authorship of the Homeric poems, whereas we are equally ignorant of and indifferent to the personality of the heroes of the lyrics of Pindar. In Watts's discussion of the epic the most original matter is that on the difference between the epics of the eastern and the western peoples. It is only in the *Niebelungenlied*, he believes, that a western epic poet has shown real unity of purpose combined with freedom of movement.

On the other hand the heroes of the western epics are more truly heroic fighters, and show a Titanic spirit of revolt against authority, of which the Satan of Milton is the most sublime embodiment.

Decay of the epic type.

In modern times the epic has wholly failed to maintain the important place which it has had in the early period of almost every nation, and the history of the attempts to revive it by conscious effort is for the most part the history of a series of failures,—many of them beautiful and important failures, but none the less failures. The reasons for this are not far to seek. In the first place, national spirit, in the simple emotional sense in which we use it of primitive peoples, decays with civilization, and ceases to gather about heroic figures and early racial traditions. We strip the mystery and the reverence from the past, as intelligence advances, and there is no great English king whom we all recognize as the historic leader of the race; for our nearest approach to it we go to Arthur,—not an Englishman at all, but an early Briton,—and recognize frankly that we do this only for poetical purposes. Secondly, the remarkable development of the subjective spirit more and more turns away our interest from the mere *deeds* of men to their character, emotions, and spiritual development, which other forms of poetry treat far better than the epic. For this reason even those modern poems which profess to be epics, like Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and Milton's *Paradise*

Lost, become epics of the inner rather than the outer world.* Thirdly, the huge scale on which a great epic was produced unfits it for the more concentrated expression of an age when literature is abundant, and when the recital of poetry has given way to rapid reading. Fourthly, the enormous development of prose fiction in modern times satisfies the instinct for *story* to which the epic formerly ministered, and poetry has turned more and more to the satisfaction of needs which cannot be met adequately in prose. The epic poems of Southey, such as *The Curse of Kehama* and *Roderick,* together with the *Gebir* of Landor, are examples of modern efforts to revive the form, transferring into English poetry epic interests drawn from other peoples, but with comparatively small success. More successful are the epic fragments, in which such an effort is concentrated into the presentation of a mere episode of almost lyrical unity,—poems like Landor's *Agamemnon and Iphigeneia* and Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum.*

* Compare the remark of a recent writer, Dr. H. B. Alexander, to the effect that the communal ideals of early poetry "resulted from the limitations of a society in which the individual existed for the community and subordinated his desires to its will. And it is just because we have outgrown the stage, the *milieu*, which they were adapted to celebrate, that the epic and ballad have ceased to be natural vehicles for poetic expression. Only in man's subordination to world fate is there a relation sufficiently analogous to warrant epical celebration; and so it is that in its maturer ages the world has produced but two great epic poems, the cosmical epics of Dante and Milton." (*Poetry and the Individual*, p. 11.)

We have next to consider certain poems which approximate to the epic type, though they lack its artistic form and significance. From early periods there are the lays* of popular heroes,—brief epics, one might call them, without the dignity of national feeling. Such is the familiar lay of *King Horn,* a hero of the mediæval period in England. Again, there are chronicle poems, summarizing national history in verse, often possessed of epic length, but without its unity either from having a single hero or otherwise. Of this the principal early example is the *Brut* of Layamon, a poem dating from the end of the twelfth century, and outlining the legendary history of England from the days of Brutus. Somewhat akin to these are the historical poems of the Elizabethan age, such as Daniel's *Civil Wars,* a verse narrative of the Wars of the Roses, and Drayton's *Mortimeriad* or *Barons' Wars,* of which the former title was intended to suggest a genuine epic quality and a central hero.

Variations of epic type.

Very different from these types, because its interest is with the inner life of the hero, not with outward action, is such a spiritual or psychological epic as Browning's *Sordello,* of which the author

* The word *lay* properly means a lyrical poem, akin to a song, but is commonly applied to narrative poems of the type indicated, which were no doubt often chanted or sung by wandering minstrels. Cf. Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

wrote: "My stress lay on the incidents in the development of a soul."

A curious separate type is the mock-heroic poem, or mock epic, which tells a story in the epic manner for purposes of ridicule. This was known even to the Greeks. In English literature the most important mock epics are Butler's *Hudibras* and Pope's *Rape of the Lock*.

The mock epic.

To return to more primitive forms of narrative, the chief of them is the ballad—a term very loosely used, but most properly applied to a brief popular narrative poem on a romantic theme. The early ballads represent the same communal stage of poetry as the early epic: many of them may have had individual authors, but these are totally lost in their work, and spoke for the whole community which they represented. These ballads, too, take us back to the time when narrative and lyrical poetry were as yet hardly separated. Many of them must originally have been sung; in others there is a refrain which may have been sung by the company while the more purely narrative portion was recited. For example:

The ballad.

"Oh did ye ever hear o' brave Earl Brand?
Ay lally, o lilly lally.
He courted the king's daughter of fair England
All i' the night so early."
(Gummere's *Old English Ballads*, p. 206.)

The themes of the ballads are few and simple,—chivalrous adventure, fairies and ghosts, love (happy or tragic), and the like,—and for the most part they profess no national significance, although in some cases, such as the *Battle of Otterburn,* a really important event is the subject. The imaginative value of many of these narratives, as seen especially in the treatment of tragic situations, and the dramatic power shown in the telling of them, are very great; after centuries of neglect, they are now recognized as among the treasures of early English poetry.

Ballad qualities.

Imitations of the ballads, made in the days of conscious literary poetry, are rarely successful, but to this the ballads of Scott are a notable exception; and certain other poets have made use of their form and manner in important instances, as Keats in *La Belle Dame sans Merci* and Rossetti in *Sister Helen.* Of modern poems in the ballad manner the greatest beyond question is Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner,* which combines the marvelous simplicity of primitive poetry with the profound suggestiveness of more intensive modern art.

Modern ballads.

The metrical romance or tale is another important type belonging to this group, which had an early origin and has never wholly failed to be a popular form. It is distinguished from the epic by being less formal, less dignified in theme, less extensive in scope, and

The metrical romance.

usually by the fact that it emphasizes not so much heroic deeds as the more romantic episodes of chivalrous adventure and love. Of this the earliest important example in our literature is an anonymous poem of the fourteenth century, called *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (lately paraphrased in modern English verse), while in the same period were produced the romances of Chaucer (including both the long and elaborate *Troilus and Cressida* * and the shorter tales of the Canterbury series), the greatest master of pure story poetry that has appeared in England. Of modern poets Dryden, Scott, Byron, and William Morris are the chief masters of the metrical romance; while others have remade old romances into later poetry, as Matthew Arnold and Swinburne with the story of Tristram and Iseult. Of all the romances none, perhaps, have found so many readers so continuously as Scott's *Marmion* and *Lady of the Lake* and Longfellow's *Evangeline.* To Byron we owe a variety of this form corresponding to the mock or burlesque epic,—the mock or ironic romance, represented by *Don Juan,* which combines in one extraordinary blending brilliant narrative

* *Troilus and Cressida* shows a tendency toward satiric criticism of life, and a realism of detail, which almost tempt one to call it a novel in verse rather than a pure romance. Of modern novels in verse—a form whose legitimacy is hardly established—interesting examples are Clough's *Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich* and Lytton's *Lucile.*

power, romantic beauty, laughing burlesque, and invective satire. It is worth noting that, while both the ballad and the epic have usually followed single metrical forms of great simplicity, the greater complexity and variety of the romance (content to miss the sustained dignity of the epic) have usually been marked by a wide variety of metrical forms.*

There remains a considerable variety of narrative poems which it is impossible to define or classify with accuracy. They may partake of the nature of the epic in dignity and method, but lack its wide scope and completeness: of this sort are the separate poems in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King,* and Matthew Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum.* (Of these the former is also distinguished from the true epic by its essentially reflective and spiritual character; the latter is perhaps the most perfect reproduction in modern poetry of the simple objectivity of the ancient epic style.) They may be designed to show how the epic manner may be applied to simple, familiar themes, like Wordsworth's *Michael* and the less successful *Dora* of Tennyson. They may re-

Other narrative forms.

* Scott, in the Introduction to *The Bridal of Triermain,* said: "According to the author's idea of romantic poetry, as distinguished from epic, the former comprehends a fictitious narrative, framed and combined at the pleasure of the writer; beginning and ending as he may judge best; which neither exacts nor refuses the use of supernatural machinery; which is free from the technical rules of the epee; and is subject only to those which good sense, good taste, and good morals apply to every species of poetry without exception."

semble the ballad in the greater brevity, rapidity, and lyrical enthusiasm of their form, like Tennyson's *Revenge* and Browning's *Hervé Riel.* Or, they may rather resemble the metrical romance in their love of romantic details and freedom of structure, like Keats's *Eve of St. Agnes,* Arnold's *Forsaken Merman,* and Burns's *Tam O'Shanter.* The lyrical ballad, in which the story related is evidently merely a means to the presentation of a particular emotion, has been discussed in an earlier paragraph. Finally, we may note the verse fable, a brief narrative poem, usually dealing with events of a supernatural or extra-natural character, designed to illustrate a specific moral lesson. Admirable English fables in verse are those of John Gay; Leigh Hunt's *Abou ben Adhem* is an example of a somewhat different sort.

Descriptive epic poems.

As a kind of pendant to this epical group we may consider that class of poems which are descriptive rather than narrative in their principal character,—poems in which objects or scenes, rather than events, form the subject-matter, but which (see page 34 above) follow the epic method of moving through space and perhaps time in the presentation of their material. For this class Wordsworth proposed the name Idyllium,* which has never become naturalized

* The term "Idyl" is very loosely used,—most commonly of descriptive-narrative poems in a pastoral setting. Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* is not a characteristic instance.

in English. Great examples are Thomson's *Seasons,* presenting the progress of nature through the cycle of the year; Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* and Burns's *Cotter's Saturday Night,* in which human society in a particular setting forms the theme; and Chaucer's Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales,* in which particular individuals—who are nevertheless representative of the whole view of English society in their age—are described. In all these poems narrative elements are used to aid in presenting the descriptive. Here also we must probably place Byron's *Childe Harold,* which begins as a genuine epic, centering the interest in a hero, but presently becomes purely descriptive, the hero serving as a mere link to connect the various scenes which he is presumed to have viewed; this is perhaps the most vividly emotional, if not the most imaginative, descriptive poem in the language.

B.—The Lyric.

Like the word epic, the word lyric is used in both a general and a more particular sense, having gradually been extended from its original meaning,— a poem to be *sung* by a single singer,—to include all poetry expressing *subjectively* the emotion of the poet or those whom he represents. In this larger sense it has come to include the great bulk of modern poetry,

Two meanings of "lyric."

—so much so that Professor Gummere is led to observe: "The history of modern verse, with epic and drama in decay, is mainly the history of lyrical sentiment." (*Beginnings of Poetry*, p. 147.) To classify satisfactorily the great body of this lyrical poetry is even more difficult than in the case of narrative poetry. One thing its various forms have in common: the expression of a single emotion or imaginative conception.

Subjective character.

The subjective or personal standpoint of the lyric must not be understood to imply either that it is necessarily autobiographical or that it represents the emotion of an individual standing quite by himself. For the poet, like other artists, is capable of entering into the experiences of the rest of humanity, not simply of recording his own; or, to look at it from the opposite standpoint, he makes the experiences of others his own by means of his imaginative sympathy. In the most primitive conditions, the lyrical poet, like the epic poet, represents not himself so much as the whole company of his fellows for whom he sings and whom he leads in song; and again in the very highest poetry he speaks not simply for himself but for the universal instincts of humanity. The earliest English song that has survived is a song of summer and the cuckoo:

"Sumer is icumen in,
Lhude sing cuccu!"

Here the nameless poet spoke for the pervading sense of joy in the season which was felt by the whole community and which they would join in expressing. If we compare this song with that great sonnet of Shakspere's, beginning—

"When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweep my outcast state,—"

we see that the latter, while it represents a maturer sentiment and a more personal emotion, is still the voice through which a common experience of humanity makes itself felt. It does not at all follow that Shakspere was "in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes" at the time he wrote it.* Other great lyrics, however, such as Burns's *To Mary in Heaven,* Byron's *Stanzas to Augusta,* Milton's Sonnet *On his Blindness,* and the lyrics of Tennyson's *In Memoriam,* are known to be the definite outcome of personal experiences.

Structure of the lyric.

Being thus the record of a single emotion, and not dependent, like the epic and the drama, upon the development of a series of events or the presentation of

* A striking example of this non-autobiographical character of poetry which is none the less saturated with personal feeling is found in the "Lucy" poems of Wordsworth, which were written, so far as has been discovered, without the slightest basis in his own experience. Yet this is a point where individual poetic characters differ; with such a poet as Shelley we may be sure that every lyric is the record of a real experience, however transitory.

character in completeness, the lyric has a more absolute unity than any of the other forms of poetry, and is usually—except where the intellectual or reflective element is present to a marked degree—decidedly brief. Its structure may be said to depend in part upon its relation to the outer and the inner worlds. Simplest of all is the lyric that remains in the outer world, though it expresses the inward emotion aroused by it; an example of this type is the old English song referred to in the previous paragraph, which begins and ends with the coming of summer and the cuckoo. More familiar is the lyric which takes its beginning at a point in the outer world, but passes to the invisible world of emotional reflection; of this type a great example is Keats's *Ode on a Grecian Urn,* which takes its point of departure at the visible object, and passes to profoundly emotional reflection on the immortality of the spirit of beauty. Or, still further, we may have the lyric which is wholly of the inner life, like certain of Shakspere's sonnets (for example, that beginning "Poor soul, the center of my sinful earth"). Lyrics of this last class are most likely to be reflective, and hence to move furthest away from the pure or *song* type.

Form of the lyric.

Finally, we may note that the forms of lyrical poetry are more varied than those of any of the classes. Originally they adapt themselves to all manner of musical melodies and accompaniments, and when, separating

from music, they become purely literary, they preserve this variety and adaptability. The lyric has no need of the sustained dignity of the continuous metrical movement of epic poetry; it requires more rapid measures, adapting themselves to its more direct and brilliant emotional expression, and for this expression all the possibilities of rhythmical art are drawn upon. There is no lyrical mood so serious, so merry, so stirring, so languid, that it does not find its appropriate metrical form. On the other hand, the brevity and concentration of the lyric demand a finer finish, a more cameo-like accuracy of form, than the other classes of poetry; hence, within the form chosen, the lyrical poet is allowed less flexibility and freedom than the writer of either epic or dramatic verse. A familiar poetic license in epic or dramatic poetry becomes a conspicuous fault in a lyric. The type is one forever aspiring after infinite riches and perfect beauty "in a little room."

The most useful discussions of lyrical poetry will be found in Hegel's work; Werner's *Lyrik und Lyriker;* Gummere's *Beginnings of Poetry* (especially the chapter on "the Differencing Elements of Art"); Dr. John Erskine's *Elizabethan Lyric* (chapter i, on "Lyrical Quality and Lyric Form"); the Introductions to Schelling's *Elizabethan Lyrics* and *Seventeenth Century Lyrics;* the Introduction to Carpenter's volume of selections called *English Lyric Poetry;* and the Introduction to Palgrave's *Golden Treasury.*

Hegel's discussion is marked by an emphasis of the subjective and individual element, in contrast to epic. "The basis of the lyrical work cannot be the development of an action in which a whole world is reflected in all the richness of its manifestations, but the soul of a man; more than this, of the man as an individual, placed in individual situations." "Man himself becomes a work of art; whereas for the epic poet the subject is a hero outside of himself." "The soul of the poet is then to be considered as the real principle of unity for a lyrical poem. On the one hand there is necessary a definite situation of the soul; in the next place, the poet must identify himself with that situation." (Bénard's paraphrase, i, pp. 245, 257, 280.) Here Hegel seems to recognize too slightly the representative character of the lyrical poet, both in primitive times and elsewhere. In another passage, however, he points out that in popular national poetry "the poet is a mere organ by means of which the national life manifests itself." (*Ibid.*, p. 264.) Another remark of Hegel's, that the most perfectly lyrical poem is one representing "a sentiment of the heart concentrated in a particular situation," is closely parallel to Palgrave's requirement that each poem admitted to his collection of lyrics "shall turn on some single thought, feeling, or situation. In accordance with this, narrative, descriptive, and didactic poems, unless accompanied by rapidity of movement, brevity, and the colouring of human passion, have been excluded." (Pref. to *The Golden Treasury.*) The requirement of brevity is further emphasized by Schelling, who holds that "by its very conditions the lyric must be short, as an emotion prolonged beyond a pleasurable length will defeat its own artistic aim." (*Eliz. Lyrics*, p. ix.) A similar position is taken by Erskine,

who, in discussing the unity of the lyric which depends on the maintenance of a single "lyric stimulus," suggests that "many long poems, which in quality are undoubtedly lyrical, in form should be considered a series of lyric units rather than one song,"—for example, Spenser's *Epithalamium*. All this is to keep closely to the original *song* type of lyric; but when we have in view the larger class, it is clear that many poems have an emotional unity of theme, and are yet built up by an elaborate structure which an added intellectual element may help to determine. In Erskine's discussion may further be found an original and suggestive passage on the structure of the successful lyric, which, it is held, should have three parts. "In the first, the emotional stimulus is given—the object, the situation, or the thought from which the song arises. In the second part the emotion is developed to its utmost capacity, until as it begins to flag the intellectual element reasserts itself. In the third part, the emotion is finally resolved into a thought, a mental resolution, or an attitude." (*The Eliz. Lyric*, p. 17.)

To classify lyrical poems, as has already been said, is even more difficult than in the case of narrative poetry: the differences between the types seem to be less distinct. An obvious method, which does not take us very far, is to group them according to their theme: lyrics of love, of grief, of patriotism, of nature, and the like. Another method, less superficial than it might seem to be, is to group according to metrical forms: lyrics in song stanzas, in the elegiac or heroic stanza, in various short stanzas,

Methods of classification.

odes, sonnets, ballades, rondeaus, and so forth. But if we wish a classification somewhat less mechanical than either of these, we may perhaps distinguish between those lyrics which keep closest to the original song type, and those which move further and further away from this in the direction of the more formal or reflective expression of emotion.

The first group, then, will be formed of the true *song* lyrics,—those which are fitted by nature to musical utterance. These are more purely emotional than those of other groups, more spontaneous and rapid in utterance, more simple in style, and are likely to be more brief. Sometimes their simplicity is such that they seem almost purely a vehicle for the expression of emotion through music, and will not show their worth when tested by mere reading. It is in the earlier periods of poetry, when emotions are simpler and less mingled with intellectual ideas, and when music is a more generally diffused art, that these song lyrics are at their best. In the Elizabethan age these conditions were combined with a high development of poetical imagination and poetical style; hence those English lyrics which are true songs, and at the same time have permanent literary worth, date more numerously from that period than from any other. Great examples are certain of the songs of Shakspere,—*O Mistress Mine, Come unto these Yellow Sands, Who is*

Song lyrics.

Sylvia, and *Hark, Hark, the Lark,*—together with Sidney's *My True Love Hath my Heart,* Nash's *Spring, the Sweet Spring,* Dekker's *O Sweet Content,* and Jonson's *Drink to me Only with thine Eyes.* In the modern period the lyric of this type has proved to be one of the most difficult and rarest of all forms of poetry, and only one author, Burns, has done much work in it of the first quality. To Burns the song lyric was what it was to primitive man: he composed his songs not as literature, on paper, but as audible utterance to melodies already flowing in his mind. Besides those of Burns, notable songs by modern poets are Scott's imitations of the popular Scottish ballad-songs (*Proud Maisie* being perhaps the best), Shelley's *Indian Serenade,* Tennyson's *Sweet and Low,* and Browning's *Cavalier Tunes.*

A particular type of the song lyric is found in the *hymn,* devoted to the emotions of religion and usually intended for choral utterance, although in form of expression it may be as personal as any lyrical type. Hymns of permanent literary value are very rare,—chiefly, no doubt, because the statement of religious doctrine is likely to increase the expository element to the danger of the imaginative. Those of the early church were in Latin, and among the best of English hymns are translations of these, such as Neale's *Jerusalem the Golden* and Ellerton's *Welcome Happy Morning.* In successful hymns of this

The hymn.

character, some doctrine of the church, or some aspiration of the individual spirit, gives form to a simple emotion which finds noble lyrical expression. Among the great original English hymns are some of Charles Wesley's (notably *Jesus, Lover of my Soul*), some of Cowper's (such as *O for a Closer Walk with God*), Heber's *The Son of God Goes Forth to War,* Stone's *The Church's One Foundation,* and How's *For all the Saints who from their Labors Rest.* Other religious lyrics, not intended originally as hymns, have been used for choral worship, and will doubtless always be remembered in connection with the appropriate music; examples of this sort are Newman's *Lead Kindly Light* and certain of the poems of Frederick William Faber, John Greenleaf Whittier, and Adelaide Proctor.

Lyrics of more literary character.

Passing from the song lyric, we may put in a second class lyrics which seem analogous to the song in their formative impulse and the simplicity and spontaneity of their utterance, so that they may easily be thought of as seeking musical expression, but which are nevertheless more literary in style than the pure song, and are capable of giving their full meed of pleasure when read as literature. Of this class are certain of Tennyson's lyrics, such as *Tears, Idle Tears,* represented in *The Princess* as being sung to the harp, yet quite as well fitted to ordinary oral utterance. Lamb's *Old Familiar Faces,* Wordsworth's *Daffodils,* Byron's *Isles of Greece,* and Browning's

Prospice might be placed in the same group. Going a step further, we find lyrics which in emotional intensity and unity are allied to the song lyric, but which are elaborated to a length and with a wealth of imagery which inevitably dissociate them from the idea of musical utterance. A great example of this type is Shelley's *Skylark;* with it we might group Hood's *Bridge of Sighs,* Collins's *Ode to Evening,* and Wordsworth's *Highland Girl.* This test—capacity or fitness for musical utterance—may be regarded as the most genuine for the gradation of lyrical poetry; yet by its nature it is also vague, and difference of opinion would soon arise such as to make impossible the drawing of clear lines of division.*

Reflective lyrics.

But we move away from the song in another way than by elaboration: namely, by the increase of the reflective

* Wordsworth, in his classification of poetry (Preface to the edition of 1815), included under Lyrical not only the song and hymn, but the ode, the elegy, and the ballad, and said that in all these, "for the production of their *full* effect, an accompaniment of music is indispensable." Of his own poems—very few of which would seem, to most persons, to be wholly adapted to musical utterance—he said: "Some of these pieces are essentially lyrical, and therefore cannot have their due force without a supposed musical accompaniment; but, in much the greatest part, as a substitute for the classic lyre or romantic harp, I require nothing more than an animated or impassioned recitation, adapted to the subject." This has indeed become the substitute for music, in our time, through a wide range of poetry. On this point see Erskine (*Eliz. Lyric,* pp. 3, 4), who quotes Brunetière to the effect that our modern lyrics sing themselves in the heart, not on the tongue.

or the intellectual element, which in the pure or typical lyric plays so slight a part, but which has been more and more introduced here—as in other forms of poetry—with the development of man's reflective and intellectual nature. Thus the lyrics of a poet like Wordsworth, suffused as they are with emotion, are nevertheless so reflective for the most part that—as has already been suggested—they could rarely find a place in the widest boundaries of the song group. The odes of Keats (the *Grecian Urn,* the *Nightingale,* and *Autumn*), although purely lyrical and not at all didactic, are sufficiently reflective to carry us into the same poetical region; and when we pass to such poems as Browning's *Abt Vogler,* Tennyson's *Higher Pantheism,* Arnold's *Rugby Chapel,* and George Eliot's *O May I Join the Choir Invisible,* we are in a region where the theme is so characteristically intellectual (though still interpreted through emotional appeal) that the song type may be said to be altogether lost.

It is a striking circumstance that three important lyrical forms, originally associated with song and music, have become for modern poetry elaborate literary forms of a highly intellectual or reflective type. These are the ode, the elegy, and the sonnet. We must consider each of them briefly by itself.

The ode.

Ode is a term very loosely used in English terminology, but by derivation is properly applied to elaborate lyrics intended for choral utterance with equally elaborate

musical accompaniment. Of this type there are very few English examples, the most notable being Dryden's two odes for St. Cecilia's Day. In general we may accept the definition of the ode proposed by Mr. Gosse in the Introduction to *English Odes*: "Any strain of enthusiastic and exalted lyrical verse, directed to a fixed purpose, and dealing progressively with one dignified theme." While the term is often used of brief poems hardly to be distinguished from other lyrics (a use chiefly due to familiarity with the so-called odes, really *carmina* or songs, of Horace), the typical ode is a highly elaborated form. Having a certain emotional unity, like all lyrics, its theme is nevertheless developed by the progress of thought guided by the underlying emotion. In a sense, therefore, it may be called the most intellectual of lyrical forms; a good ode is usually more susceptible of analysis by prose paraphrase than lyrics of other kinds. Odes of this elaborate character are commonly divided into more or less intricate metrical sections, or strophes,* which correspond more or less closely both with the structure of the thought—thus being analogous to paragraphs in prose composition—and with the ebb and flow of the poet's emotion. Examples of odes notably successful in this respect, and conforming in all particulars to our definition, are Spenser's *Epithalamium,* Collins's *Ode To Liberty,* Gray's

* On the technical characteristics of the ode forms, see chapter vi.

Progress of Poesy, Dryden's *Alexander's Feast* (peculiar in being set in narrative form), Shelley's *Ode to Naples,* Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality,* Tennyson's *Ode on the Death of Wellington,* and Lowell's *Harvard Commemoration Ode.* In such poems it is the intense emotional exaltation and the dignity of the theme which support the lyric through a length and an intellectual elaboration which would otherwise be destructive of lyrical unity.

The elegy.

Elegy is a term also very loosely used. Originally perhaps meaning a poem of lamentation for the dead, set to musical accompaniment, it came to be used in Greek and Latin literature of all poems written in a particular metre, their subjects being very various. In English usage the elegy has usually been a poem dealing with grief connected with death, although in some instances classical usage has been followed in applying the term to poems including a wide variety of subjects (as, for example, the elegies of Donne). But in any case the elegy must be viewed not as a simple lyrical utterance, but as a more or less formalized and elaborated expression of a serious emotion. The great example of the type is Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard,* where the mingled emotions aroused by the contemplation of evening and the home of the dead become the impulse which develops a generalized reflective portrayal of the transitoriness of human life. The re-

sult is even didactic, in a sense; but lyrical none the less, in the large use of the term.

A particular type of this form is the *pastoral elegy,* in which the poet's sorrow for a lost friend is set in a framework of pastoral narrative or description, conventionalized after a fashion prevalent in late Greek poetry. It might seem that such an unreal setting would be utterly inappropriate for the expression of genuine personal grief; but experience has shown that sorrow may find relief in artistic utterance not only of the more direct sort, where poetry comes nearest to familiar prose speech (as in Tennyson's—

The pastoral elegy.

> "I sometimes hold it half a sin
> To put in words the grief I feel"),

but also in a restrained and formalized art, suggestive of the conventional ceremonies of funeral pomp. Examples of these pastoral elegies in our literature are Spenser's Pastoral Eclogue on the death of Sir Philip Sidney, Milton's *Lycidas,* and Arnold's *Thyrsis.* In Shelley's *Adonais* a somewhat similar classical (though not pastoral) setting is adopted for the opening of the poem, but is soon left behind. Finally it should be noted that the term elegy is sometimes applied to a brief lyric of lamentation, more fittingly called a *dirge.*

The *sonnet* derives its name from the fact that it was originally a song to be sung to accompaniment; yet it is now the least song-like of all brief lyrics. This seems to be due chiefly to the fact that its fixed length and intricate structure (on the rules for this, see chapter vi) early appeared to fit it for the elaborated and hence more or less reflective expression of emotion; and this, true in other languages, is doubly true for English, since English writers have always shunned highly intricate metrical forms for the expression of simple emotions. The sonnet, therefore, while a favorite form with many of our greatest poets, is rarely used for other than distinctly conscious and formal expression; at its best, too, it expresses a definite intellectual conception fused with a single emotion. Its two-part structure (in the case of the Italian form) makes it peculiarly fitted for that lyrical movement described on a previous page, where the impulse takes its rise in the outer world and passes to a point in the inner. Originally the emotion of love was the conventional theme for the sonnet; and the love sonnets of the Elizabethan age, notably those of Sidney, Spenser, and Shakspere, remain the best examples of this type in our language. Milton and Wordsworth made use of the form for very different themes,—a circumstance to which Landor finely alludes in the lines:

The sonnet.

"He * caught the sonnet from the dainty hand
Of Love, who cried to lose it, and he gave
The notes to Glory;"—

and their poems include on the whole the finest examples of what may be called the spiritualized sonnet. In the sonnet beginning—

"Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room"

Wordsworth briefly discusses the limitations of the highly restricted form, suggesting that a soul which has "felt the weight of too much liberty" may find pleasure in being confined within such a "scanty plot of ground." This suggests the character of the lyrical pleasure derived from this form: a pleasure restrained, fixed, deriving a certain zest from the difficulty and finish of the formal expression, and—as has already been suggested—dependent very often on the combination of a concept of the mind with a related emotion.

Finally, we have to notice under lyrical forms of poetry a type which is allied to the song in lightness and grace, but distinguished from the more familiar song types by both matter and manner. Both manner and matter give it its name in a French phrase which has thus far found no adequate

Vers de société.

* i. e., Milton. There were, it should be noted, not a few writers of "spiritual" sonnets even in the Elizabethan age.

English equivalent:* *vers de société.* This sort of poetry takes as its theme, in the words of Professor Schelling, "man living in a highly organized state of society;" it turns "the conventions of social life into a subject for art." (Introduction to *Seventeenth Century Lyrics.*) Or, in the words of Mr. Austin Dobson, it represents the mood and manner of "those latter-day Athenians who, in town and country, spend their time in telling or hearing some new thing, and whose graver and deeper impulses are subordinated to a code of artificial manners." In the same connection one may note a stanza in reminiscent praise of the verse of Sir Frederick Locker-Lampson, in which Mr. Dobson again suggests the qualities of *vers de société:*

> "a verse so neat,
> So well-bred and so witty—
> So finished in its last conceit,
> So mixed of mirth and pity." †

All this is different from the usual lyrical method, which is likely to separate from their trivial environing associations the elemental emotions of man; yet the modern writers of society verse often touch their bantering manner with genuine feeling and imaginative insight. Examples of this type of

* The editor of a recent anthology of society verse, Miss Carolyn Wells, proposes the name "gentle verse."

† Both quotations are from the prefatory matter of the second Rowfant Catalogue (1901).

poetry will be found among the lyrics of Waller, Cowley, Herrick, Carew, and Prior, in its earlier manner; of the later manner William M. Praed, Charles S. Calverley, Sir Frederick Locker-Lampson, and Mr. Austin Dobson are notable representatives,—so also, among American poets, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Thomas Bailey Aldrich. A single stanza from Prior's verses called *A Better Answer* well exhibits the spirit and style of society verse:

"What I speak, my fair Chloe, and what I write, shows
The difference there is betwixt nature and art:
I court others in verse; but I love thee in prose:
And they have my whimsies; but thou hast my heart."

Examples showing more of the tenderness, the gentle reminiscent manner, introduced into the form by the later poets, are Locker's *To my Grandmother,* Holmes's *Dorothy Q.* and *Last Leaf*, and Aldrich's *Thalia,* in which "a middle-aged lyrical poet is supposed to be taking leave of the Muse of Comedy." On a group of verse forms especially connected, in recent poetry, with *vers de société,* see below in chapter vi, pages 378-384.

For critical accounts of *vers de société*, one may see, besides the passage from *Seventeenth Century Lyrics* cited above, the preface of Locker-Lampson to the anthology called *Lyra Elegantiarum,* and Miss Wells's Preface to *A Vers de Société Anthology.*

C.—The Drama.

The drama is unique among the forms of poetry in being not merely a form of poetry but in a sense an art by itself, or a union of arts. It represents life not only by means of speech, like the other literary arts, but by visible action, usually with a visible setting of scenery, and sometimes (as always in the Greek drama) with the additional aid of music and dancing. Thus it has laws of its own, and a history of its own, which differentiate it clearly from the other types of poetry. We may of course consider the drama only as literature,—that is, only as written and read; but in that case we have to supply by the imagination (helped by the occasional suggestions of the author) all the action and some of the scenery. There is, moreover, a considerable body of drama written in prose, the general structure and method of which are not essentially different from that written in poetry,—a fact which further suggests that the drama cannot be considered merely as a part of the territory covered by poetry. Much confusion in the history and criticism of the form would be avoided if this were frankly recognized.

Composite character of the drama.

Dramatic poetry, nevertheless, is one of the great types included in our study, and we have to consider it from that standpoint, omitting as far as possible those

Lyric and epic qualities combined.

aspects of it which do not properly concern its poetical character. As such, it relates itself at the same time to both lyrical and epic poetry: like the epic, presenting human experience objectively, and in terms of action; and, like the lyric, viewing this experience through the minds and feelings, and expressing it through the utterances of, the characters themselves. Combining thus, in a sense, the points of view of both epic and lyric, and also including something of the methods of the arts which deal in relations of *space* as well as those of time, it may be said to present the most complete view of life of all the arts.

Language of dramatic poetry.

Owing to the fact that dramatic poetry presents life as actually in progress, through the actions and utterances of the characters concerned, it follows that its language attempts to represent the actual speech of man more directly, or—as is sometimes said—*realistically,* than the other forms of poetry. The epic poet begins to speak when the action is over, and is conscious that he is weaving into an artistic form the experiences of his heroes; the lyric poet interprets his theme in terms of a single emotion through which everything is viewed and which gives its own artistic form to his expression; but the dramatic poet is letting us hear men and women speak at the moment when their experience is still incomplete, and before it has shown its final artistic significance. This of course does not mean that

their speech is a mere copy of what they would say in real life: otherwise we should not be concerned with it as poetry; it is idealized, made beautiful, and given artistic form, like all the materials taken by poets and transfigured by their art. But the speech of the dramatic poem is, on the whole, certainly closer to the speech of real life, or made to appear so, than that of epic or lyric. This is no doubt one reason why the metrical form called "blank verse" (to be discussed in detail in chapter v) is universally preferred for dramatic poetry: as developed by our great dramatists, it has a singular power of representing the changing cadences of natural human utterance while at the same time lifting them into the language of art.

Structure of the drama.

From what has been said in the preceding paragraph of the position of the dramatic poet in relation to his material, as contrasted with the lyrical and the epic poet, it follows also that the *unity* of the drama is a different thing from the unity of either of the other forms. We are not here concerned, as in the epic, with a dominating hero who moves on the straight line of some great action, meeting occasional obstacles only to overcome them, and assisted when needful by the overruling powers; nor, as in the lyric, with a single emotion of a single individual or group. We have to do with many persons, with complicated action and conflicting emotions, and it may be that we do not see until the poem is finished

what is the real end to which the poet has been moving. Dramatic poetry presents human life in *conflict,* in a sense which is true of no other poetry, and the unity which is at length seen to emerge from this represented conflict is a larger and more subtle unity—attained after greater difficulty—than that characteristic of epic or lyric.

The form of the drama is more fixed than that of the other forms of poetry. The epic poem is of indeterminate length—its only limit, in early practice, being the memory of the reciter and the patience of his audience; nor is it intended to be heard or read at a single sitting. The lyric poem is brief, but nevertheless of uncertain length, as melody or other animating impulse may suggest: and its form, as we have seen, may be one of a thousand. The drama, being intended for presentation in limited periods of time on certain public occasions, early took on a certain prescribed length—not ironclad in regularity, but without very wide variation; and other circumstances connected with its public presentation resulted in its being divided into regular parts, called *acts,* of a fairly fixed number (three to five being the usual limits). This fixity of form, together with the fact discussed in the preceding paragraph—the presentation of conflict slowly giving place to a sense of unity,—makes the drama the form of poetry best adapted to present the idea of *law* in human life. It shows man struggling

Form of the drama.

either with his fellows or with the overruling powers, through a series of experiences, to an outcome which often—perhaps usually—suggests the triumph of some law which is as much greater than the individual struggler as the whole of life is greater than any of its parts.

Since dramatic poetry is characterized by such great dignity, and has this special power of presenting life in more completeness than the other forms of poetry, it is at first thought surprising that it should have declined as it has in modern English literature. We cannot account for it, as in the case of the epic, by the growing interest in the inner life of man; for although the drama presents man's life in the form of outward action, its spiritual character is often no less marked than that of lyrical poetry. One possible reason for its lessening power is that the poet's personality is concealed in the drama even more than in the epic, whereas art has tended to become more and more subjective,—that is to say, to express more and more vividly the personality of the artist. A second reason may be found in the fact that in recent times (since the end of the seventeenth century, for comedy, and the end of the eighteenth century for tragedy) there has been a growing tendency to write the English drama in prose, thus taking it out of the region of poetic art, and depriving it of those special powers which poetry conferred upon it in the days of its splendor

Decay of dramatic poetry.

—the age of Shakspere. This tendency has not been felt to the same degree in the drama of other modern languages, and their dramatic literature has not suffered so greatly. But the principal cause is doubtless the fact that, from the close of the Elizabethan period (for reasons which cannot be discussed here), the *acted* drama has declined in dignity and artistic importance; whereas the purely literary drama—the dramatic poem not produced on the stage—necessarily appeals to but a small class of readers. Since the imagination must supply the action not described in the poem itself, and since the imagination is a faculty made effective only by exercise, the reading of a drama is for the bulk of humanity a somewhat exhausting task. It is quite possible, however, to train the imagination so that this hindrance will not be felt,—so that even finer action and scenery will be supplied by the inner eye than can possibly be presented on the stage.

Useful references on the drama are the discussions of Aristotle and Hegel, Volkelt's *Æsthetik des Tragischen,* Freytag's *Technique of the Drama,* Schlegel's Lectures on the Drama, Bradley's *Shakespearian Tragedy,* and Woodbridge's *The Drama: its Laws and its Technique.* Aristotle did not define dramatic poetry as a whole, but described Tragedy, in which he was chiefly interested, as "an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts

of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions. . . . As tragic imitation implies persons acting, it necessarily follows, in the first place, that scenic equipment will be a part of tragedy. Next, song and diction, for these are the medium of imitation." (Chap. vi; Butcher's translation.) The succeeding chapters discuss the unity of the tragic plot (consisting not in its hero, but in its action), the structure of the action, probability of characters, etc. This, like most works on the drama, treats it rather as an art by itself than as a form of poetry. An exception is found in Hegel's discussion, on which was based the preceding treatment of dramatic poetry as a combination of the subjective method of the lyric with the objective method of the epic. Freytag's analysis of the structure of a drama is the most elaborate and influential to be found in modern criticism. Expanding Aristotle's two-fold division into Complication and *Dénouement* (or Solution), he finds in the tragedy an introductory Exposition, a Complication marked at its height by the "climax" and at its close by the "tragic moment," whence it passes to the Solution and then to the Catastrophe.

To classify dramatic poetry satisfactorily is no less difficult than in the case of the other two forms. Here, as elsewhere, there are different standpoints from which lines may be drawn which will cross one another variously. Perhaps the simplest basis of classification would be the extent to which the drama depends for its effect upon external presentation,—

Dramas classified by external form.

visible action, scenery, music, and the like. According to this division, we should find at one extreme the form called the *masque,* exceedingly popular in the early seventeenth century. In some cases this form contains only a slight literary element, being for the most part a vehicle for elaborate scenic and musical effects (as in the masques of Ben Jonson); in a few instances, notably the *Comus* of Milton, it has important poetical and dramatic values. At the other extreme from the masque, in respect to this scheme of classification, is the so-called "closet drama," not intended for stage presentation, but working out the dramatic process in poetry addressed to the ear and the inward eye. Examples are Byron's *Manfred,* Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound,* and Browning's *Pippa Passes.* Between these two classes comes the great body of those dramatic poems, headed by Shakspere's, which, though originally written for stage presentation, have for the modern world a place in pure poetry even more important than their place on the stage.

A second method of classification, suggestive in some respects, would be to divide dramas into those more strictly dramatic, and those tending on the one hand toward the lyrical or on the other toward the epical character. The masques, already briefly considered, would belong also in the lyrical class, as would pastoral dramas like Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess,* because

Dramas tending toward epic or lyric character.

of the prevalence of the song element in their texts. So also, though on somewhat different grounds, would those dramas in which the poet, instead of representing objectively the characters of the action, makes them vehicles for the expression of his own emotions. Most of the dramas of Byron and Browning tend toward this character, as does the *Prometheus* of Shelley. Of dramas tending, on the other hand, toward the epic character, the great examples are the "histories" or chronicle plays, so popular in the sixteenth century, whose method was not to set forth man in conflict with his fellows or his fate, but to present a pageant of national life in a series of scenes, or to show forth the triumphs of a hero. Among the most epical of such plays is Shakspere's *Henry V*—a hero-poem rather than a pure drama. Similar, so far as the present standpoint is concerned, were the so-called "heroic" plays of the late seventeenth century, of which Dryden's *Conquest of Granada* is the leading example.

Classical and romantic dramas.

Once more, considered with reference to their formal structure, we may classify dramas according as they conform to what is called the *classical* standard, or as they exhibit the greater freedom of structure often called *romantic*. The dramatists of the classical group, including both the ancient Greeks and those in modern periods who have imitated or resembled the Greeks in their standards of poetical form

(notably, for example, the French dramatists of the seventeenth century), present human experience in a restrained and formalized fashion, concentrating the action of the drama into comparatively few important scenes, avoiding all extraneous material, and moving forward severely and uninterruptedly to the appointed end. The romantic dramatists, on the other hand (notably those of Elizabethan England), present their material in a form closer to actual experience, with as much freedom as the dramatic form will permit, with an abundance of scenes—often apparently digressive in character, though always intended to contribute something to the principal purpose of the play,—and progressing toward the conclusion by what might be described as darting and eddying movements, in contrast with the straight line of the other type of structure. Thus, for example, the classical drama brings all the action into a single place, and does not attempt to represent events more than a few hours apart; while in the romantic drama we may pass from Venice to Rome, from London to Calais, from Rome to the battle-field at Philippi, and may also leap over months and years in passing from one act to another. (Compare, as a particularly striking example, Shakspere's *Antony and Cleopatra,* the action of which occupies no less than forty-two distinct scenes, in all quarters of the Roman empire, with Dryden's *All For Love,* in which the same material is made over into something more nearly

approaching the classical form.) The romantic drama has in this way a greater capacity for presenting developments of character and varieties of passion; its picture of the world is like that of one unhindered by space or time, who may carry us hither and thither at will on the wings of the imagination, showing us how events, now here—now there, are all contributing toward the coming conclusion. The classical form, on the other hand, has a restrained power of its own, showing how whole lifetimes and cycles of fate may be concentrated in particular moments and places, and emphasizing the reign of law or destiny by the swift and inexorable movement of its action. The great English dramas are largely in the romantic form; but Shakspere's *Tempest* closely approaches the classical standard in the formal "unities" of time and place, while *Othello,* which involves but one important flight through time and space, and which has fewer of what can possibly be called irrelevant details than any of his other plays, approximates to the swift and severe effect of classical tragedy.*

Since the matter of the "unities," like other aspects of the conflict of classical and romantic qualities in the drama, is not strictly a part of the consideration of the drama *as poetry*, it must be slighted here. The best account of it will be found in Lounsbury's *Shaks-*

* Addison's *Cato* is one of the few English dramas following strictly the classical structure, with unity of both place and time.

pere as a Dramatic Artist. Landmarks in the history of the discussion are Corneille's *Discourses* (published with his collected dramas in 1660), the dispute which centered about *The Cid* (see the various pamphlets included in Gasté's *La Querelle du Cid*), Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1667), Rymer's *Tragedies of the last Age* (1678), Kames's *Elements of Criticism* (1762), Johnson's Preface to Shakspere (1765), Lessing's *Dramaturgie* (1767-69), and Coleridge's Shakspere Lectures (delivered 1818). The neo-classical insistence on the unities of time and place was in part the result of the misunderstanding of Aristotle's dictum (which was simply to the effect that "tragedy endeavors, as far as possible, to confine itself to a single revolution of the sun," in contrast to the limitless time of epic action), and chiefly to the exaggerated authority of classical models. The old argument against the romantic type of drama, that it made excessive demands upon the imagination of the spectator, is entirely obsolete; Dr. Johnson's answer to it, in his Preface to Shakspere, left little to be desired. The real source of pleasure in the highly unified drama is not its reasonableness, but—what has been slighted by the critics of the romantic period—its remarkable sense of order and of concentration.

Comedy and tragedy.

But finally and chiefly, the most familiar and important classification of dramas is into the two prevailing forms called Comedy and Tragedy. In different periods these terms have been used with divergent meanings; but in general the comedy is a drama characterized by the fact that it deals with familiar life, with themes of comparatively slight dignity,

and with successful issues in the conflict of humanity with opposing forces; while the tragedy is a drama dealing with life on an ideal plane, with themes of great dignity, and with failure or defeat as the issue of human conflict.* Comedy may be of a romantic type, laying strong emphasis on the elements of adventure, beauty, and love, in which case it is naturally poetical, and at its best in verse; or it may be more realistic, like the pure "comedy of manners," in which case it tends also to be satiric, and to move out of the region of poetry into that of prose. Tragedy, from its very nature, is essentially poetical in character, and is usually in verse.† Both these forms are so familiar as to require no illustration.

The pleasure derived from comedy is easy to understand; it lies—apart from the incidental amusement usually characteristic of the form—in the presentation of those conflicts in human experience which do not stir the emotions too deeply to be enjoyed with a light heart, set forth in a manner which assures a happy

The pleasure of comedy.

* The "unhappy ending" associated so generally with modern tragedy was not originally an essential part of the conception; compare, for example, the *Alcestis* of Euripides. Neither were the terms comedy and tragedy always confined to dramatic poems; thus Dante called his great poem a *Commedia*, mediæval usage applying the term to any narrative of an ill beginning with a good ending. Chaucer, on the other hand, uses the term "tragedie" of any story of fortune turning from good to ill.

† On this point, see p. 200 below.

outcome. The problem of the pleasure derived from tragedy, in which the profoundest emotions are stirred, and under conditions which lead inevitably to a catastrophe involving defeat and (usually) death, is more difficult. Many explanations have been offered for it; some of them superficial and unsatisfactory, as for example, that we enjoy seeing a presentation of the suffering of others—when it is not too horrible —from the sense that we are more fortunate than they. But right-minded persons do nothing of the kind. It is also pointed out that there is a pleasure in the mere imitation or representation of any human experience; and this is true, but it accounts only for the pleasurableness of tragedy as poetry, not as *tragic* poetry. Three more satisfactory explanations may be suggested. First, in the very stirring of the deeper emotions, even those connected with pathos and pain, provided one's own personality is not too intimately touched, there is a strange pleasure, such as is given to many persons by funeral pomp and the music of dirges.* Second,

The pleasure of tragedy.

* This explanation suggests the "katharsis" or "purgation" theory of Aristotle, as interpreted by some to be a reference to the relief produced by the overflow of the deeper emotions which normally exist and seek functional expression. Compare the remarks of Milton in the Preface to *Samson Agonistes:* "Tragedy . . . said by Aristotle to be of power, by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such-like passions; that is, to temper or reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight stirred up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated. Nor is Nature her-

the fact that these deeper emotions form the theme of tragedy, together with the fact that tragedy deals with conflicts of the most profound significance, enables the tragic poet to employ his powers of eloquent language and of imaginative conception more completely than in any other poetic form. Third, and probably most important of all, the defeat presented in tragedy usually suggests at the very moment of its most sorrowful exhibition the presence of some great law triumphing over individual weakness; and this is a noble conception, in which the human mind always takes a stern and mysterious pleasure. All these things are illustrated in the conclusion of one of the greatest of modern tragedies, *Hamlet*. The reader's horror and pity have been stirred, yet by circumstances so distant and so idealized as not to have the painfulness of immediate suffering. His sense of the

self wanting in her own effects to make good his assertion; for so, in physic, things of melancholic hue and quality are used against melancholy, sour against sour, salt to remove salt humours." "In other words," Butcher adds in quoting the passage, "tragedy is a form of homeopathic treatment, curing emotion by means of an emotion like in kind, but not identical." A broader interpretation of the doctrine understands by "katharsis" a kind of purification or ennobling of the passions, by relieving them of that which is personal, selfish, or morbid, and exerting them in connection with suffering which is great, worthy, and external to one's self. In Butcher's phrase, again: the emotions "are disengaged from the petty interests of self, and are on the way to being universalized." See his whole discussion in chapter vi of *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry*; also Worsfold's, in *The Principles of Criticism*.

beauty of sorrow is awakened by the wonderful dying words of the hero—

"Absent thee from felicity a while,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
To tell my story."

And he has been led by the movement of the whole tragedy to perceive a mysterious destiny triumphing over human sins and errors, whose final outworking, when all the persons of the action have beaten themselves against it in vain, leaves blended with his sadness an impression of reconciliation and peace.

The term "poetic justice" is sometimes applied to dramatic outcomes which not only satisfy this deeper moral perception of the triumph of destiny, but which also satisfy the more superficial desire that good and evil in character shall meet their appropriate ends. This sort of justice is usually satisfied in comedy, but by no means always in tragedy. In the eighteenth century certain critics tried to insist upon its place in tragic structure,—notably John Dennis, who attacked the *Cato* of Addison because it presented virtue finally defeated, and Dr. Johnson, who could not but feel that Shakspere "makes no just distribution of good or evil." Addison answered the arguments of Dennis in *The Spectator,* No. 40. The demand for poetic justice is based on an exaggeration of the doctrine of idealism in poetry,—that it must transcend real life in its order and beauty. But, as Addison pointed out, this does not mean that it must fly in the face of common experience, which involves the good

and evil alike in tragic circumstance. As sometimes stated, a modern doctrine of poetic justice would require that all dramatic catastrophes must in some way be the logical outcome of the characters concerned; but it is difficult to see how such a view could be made to include all the tragic elements of *Lear, Hamlet, Othello,* or *Romeo and Juliet,* even if we can find it exemplified in *Julius Cæsar* and *Macbeth.* The matter is profound in its critical suggestiveness; it is sufficient, perhaps, to suggest here the distinction between justice as worked out for individuals, and a sense of order in the cyclic progress of events. The latter it is certainly a usual function of tragedy to satisfy. On this subject interesting discussions will be found in Butcher's *Aristotle,* Bradley's *Shakspearian Tragedy,* Volkelt's *Æsthetik des Tragischen,* Thorndike's *Tragedy,* and Mr. Churton Collins's Essay on "Sophocles and Shakspere." See also Moulton's *Moral System of Shakspere* for a defense of the use of the element of accident in tragedy. On the problem of the pleasurable character of tragedy one may see Hume's essay on Tragedy, in which he cites the explanations offered by the French critics Dubos and Fontenelle. The same matter is considered by Mr. Alexander in his *Poetry and the Individual,* from which the following is a suggestive extract: "Realization of human powerlessness is what gives tragedy its pain, and if the tragedy rests with this it is pessimistic. . . . . But tragedy of the nobler sort never accepts defeat, or rather in the ordinary defeats of life it recognizes the one true victory. The human soul, we might say, never comes to its own until it has undergone the *katharsis* of tragic sorrow. . . . The reason why death is the fitting end of tragedy I take to be the fact that death means the final su-

premacy of the soul; it is the sign of the breaking away from the paltriness and hindrances of mortal days. In beauty there is an eternity of promise which death cannot subdue, and the strange calm which succeeds the spectacle of tragic dissolution comes not from a sense of defeat but from awe of the fulfilment." (pp. 230, 231.)

We have to note also that certain dramas refuse to be classified as either comedy or tragedy, but combine in themselves some of the elements of each. The epic or heroic type, already briefly considered, is of this character,—dealing, like tragedy, with life on an ideal plane and with themes of great dignity, yet without the element of tragic conflict. So also with the so-called "tragi-comedy" of the seventeenth century, now often called "dramatic romance." In this type of drama we find all the materials of tragedy,—conflict of important personages, animated by high emotions, apparently moving toward a certain catastrophe; then an unexpected reversal of the action, which is brought to a happy, or sometimes to an only partially happy, conclusion. Examples of this type are *Philaster,* by Beaumont and Fletcher, and certain of the late plays of Shakspere, notably *Cymbeline* and *A Winter's Tale.* Another name for this kind of play, borrowed from the Germans, is "reconciling drama," which suggests that the effort of the dramatist is to reconcile or harmonize the opposing standpoints of comedy

Mingling of tragedy and comedy.

and tragedy. Many charming dramas of this type have been written, which we should be sorry indeed to have missed; but in general criticism regards the type as inferior to either of the legitimate forms—comedy and tragedy. For the purpose of this reconciling, romantic type of story, the drama is the least appropriate form.

In the criticism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the discussion of this type of drama, the "tragi-comedy," was constantly confused (for example, by Dr. Johnson) with the discussion of the use of comic episodes in tragedy, familiar throughout the Elizabethan drama. Modern criticism distinguishes the two things carefully: the latter is a device either for the relief or the heightening of tragic effect, the other is a matter of confused or compromised dramatic structure. The best account of the character of the dramatic romances of the seventeenth century is to be found in Thorndike's *Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakspere* and his Introduction to Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* and *Maid's Tragedy*.

The burlesque drama.

In conclusion, we may note the existence of the burlesque drama, analogous to the burlesque or mock epic. It may take the form of comedy, like Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, or of mock tragedy, like Fielding's *Tom Thumb the Great*. In either case, from its very nature it tends to pass out of the field of poetry into that of prose satire.

CHAPTER III.

THE BASIS OF POETRY (INTERNAL).

In this chapter we have to consider certain matters already touched upon in chapter i, relating to the nature of poetry apart from its external form. They involve a further consideration of what is meant by the imagination as the means by which experiences are poetically represented; of the relation of this factor of poetry to the presentation of beauty and truth; and of the ways in which it affects on the one hand the subject-matter of poetry, and on the other hand its style.

Problems of the internal nature of poetry.

In saying that poetry treats its material with reference to the emotions and by means of the imagination, we have seen that this implies a contrast with the processes of reason as used by science in the observation and classification of objective facts. Let us see further in what ways imagination is to be contrasted with the pure reason.

The imagination.

The word suggests the making of *images*—images in the mind's eye which more or less resemble the images which are there when an object is seen; and in the simplest

Imagination as a form of memory.

use of the term nothing more is implied. Thus Addison included in his "pleasures of the imagination" only "such as arise from visible objects," either seen or remembered. From this standpoint the imagination is a peculiarly vivid form of memory, and is the basis of the picture-making or story-making faculty which we all feel that we have somewhere within us when we recall the best things that we have seen. Not only, however, the things that we have seen: for, while both memory and imagination are perhaps more at home with objects of sight than with those perceived by the other senses, they are quite capable of representing sounds, odors, and the perceptions of taste and touch.

If the poet did nothing more than this, then, his imagination would be of the utmost importance. He can recall, first picturing to himself and then to his reader, a great window in some ancient castle,

> "All garlanded with carven imageries
> Of fruits, and flowers, and branches of knot-grass,
> And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
> Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes;"

or, it may be, the sounds of an autumn evening, when

> "full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
> Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
> The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;"

or tastes, as of

> "jellies soother than the creamy curd,
> And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;"

or scents, as of a garden where

> "the rose
> Blendeth its odor with the violet;"

or some such sensation of touch as when one has felt

> "the cold full sponge to pleasure pressed,
> By minist'ring slaves, upon his hands and feet."*

In all these cases the imagination of the reader instantly responds to his, and reproduces—still by the aid of memory—an image and a related emotion such as the poet had within himself.

But this is not all; for the imagination is more than memory. It not only recalls past sensations, but adds to them and subtracts from them, making, from the materials thus furnished, new images which have no precise counterpart in nature. Indeed the first example just quoted is an instance of this: the window described was not a real window of the

The creative imagination.

* All these quotations are from the poetry of Keats, who is in a peculiar sense the poet of vivid physical sensations, imaginatively beautified and perpetuated.

poet's experience, but one made up of the beauties of many windows seen and remembered, now brought together to form a new creation. Such creations may even take us out of the region of ordinary experience, as in the case of the home of Arnold's Merman,—

"Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream, . . .
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye."

Or, still further, they may deal with experiences quite beyond human possibility, as in the wondrous music, such as was never heard by mortal ear, described in Tennyson's *Vision of Sin:*

"Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
Gathering up from all the lower ground;
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled
Low voluptuous music winding trembled. . . .
Then the music touched the gates and died,
Rose again from where it seemed to fail,
Stormed in orbs of song, a growing gale;
Till, thronging in and in, to where they waited,
As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,
The strong tempestuous treble throbbed and palpitated."

Yet once more, the poet's imagination may create

new personages, with characters so real that they become our friends and companions, though they were never seen on earth: Portia, Shylock, Macbeth, Chaucer's pilgrims, Tennyson's King Arthur, —we know how these look and speak and feel. They are more real to us than men who died a hundred years ago; yet they are only the creatures of poetic imagination. It is such a capacity as this that leads us to apply the term *creative* to the imaginative arts: they remind us of the primal powers of the Creator himself.

In earlier usage this is about as far as the term Imagination went. It would seem to be quite as much as Shakspere meant, for example in the passage from the *Midsummer Night's Dream,* quoted in chapter i, where the "imagination" is compared with the capacity of the lover and the madman for seeing things that do not exist objectively, bodying forth "the forms of things unknown." * But in later times, especially since the days of Coleridge and Wordsworth, who were among the first writers to use the word with a distinctively larger meaning, the imagination has meant something more than this power to produce mental experiences resembling

The interpretative imagination.

* He goes on to say—what we have already seen to be true, in terms of modern psychology—that such imaginative processes are called into action by some dominating *emotion:*

"Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear!"

those of the five senses. In the larger sense it includes the power of comparing and combining such images, noting resemblances between them which have a meaning for the inner life, though they may have none for the senses or the pure reason, and of leaping to conclusions which resemble those drawn by the reason from common experience—only more rapidly and in different regions. This is the aspect of the imagination which is especially opposed to the more elaborate reasoning processes, as the simpler aspect is in contrast with those simpler reasoning processes which enable us to tell what is objectively real.

An example from Shelley.

Let us illustrate this second aspect. In Shelley's *Skylark* there is a series of statements about the lark and what it resembles: in one stanza we are told that it springs from earth "like a cloud of fire;" in another that it is as invisible as "a star of heaven in the broad daylight;" in another that the earth and air are as full of its voice as they are of moonlight "when night is bare;" in others that the lark is like a poet singing unbidden hymns, like a maiden shut in a tower, like a glow-worm scattering its light in a dark dell, like a rose that makes the wind faint with its sweetness. All these are comparisons between images of the senses; first of all, as we should expect, images of the sense of sound, but also of that of sight and that of smell; and none of them are such comparisons as the *reason* would

suggest. The reason replies—as we may conceive: a skylark is not at all like a cloud, still less like a rose, least of all like a moonlight night. But the imagination of the poet has declared this resemblance, because the emotion awakened in him by the skylark has leaped from one thing to another,—from the sensation produced by moonlight to that produced by a haunting song or the ravishing odor of a rose,—in the effort to reveal that emotion in all its beauty. It goes further yet, and in still another stanza passes altogether out of the range of images of the senses, declaring that the lark is "like an unbodied Joy." This cannot be pictured by eye or ear, but in a purely spiritual way—such as only the poet, of all artists, can make use of—presents the theme to an inner imaginative sense.

Again, in Dryden's *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* the poet begins his praise of music by a reference to the traditional teaching—suggested both by certain Greek philosophers and by the saying in the book of *Job* that at the creation "the morning stars sang together"—that the making of the universe was accompanied by supernaturally glorious music.

An example from Dryden.

"From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man."

Then, at the close of the poem, carrying on this conception by a sudden leap of the imagination, he represents the end of the world—announced by the "last trumpet" spoken of in the New Testament—as taking place in an infinitely tremendous dissonance,—a final harmonic crash:

> "So when the last and dreadful hour
> This crumbling pageant shall devour,
> The trumpet shall be heard on high,
> The dead shall live, the living die,
> And Music shall untune the sky."

Thus the poet's imagination brings together two conceptions which for the reason are absolutely distinct: the making of harmony and dissonance to the ear by different musical sounds, and the progress of the created universe from some unknown beginning to some unknown end.

An example from Keats.

Once more: in the *Ode on a Grecian Urn* Keats pictures an ancient urn on which are carved figures of men playing on pipes and timbrels—long buried records of some choral tune forever lost to our knowledge. Instead, however, of lamenting this lost music, the poet tells us that

> "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
> Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on!"

How play on? asks the reason, if we permit it to intrude.

"Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe *to the spirit* ditties of no tone."

Thus again, led by his emotion of delight in the perpetuated beauty of ancient art, the poet's imagination declares that those pipes can forever play unheard music to the inner ear.

An example from Wordsworth.

A final illustration may be drawn from Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality*. As a young boy, Wordsworth had been deeply impressed by the beauty and glory of nature, and in the ode he represents himself as finding, in middle life, that this glory had faded for him,—he could not see in flower and hillside the unearthly beauty of his childish experience. By an abrupt leap of the imagination he is then led to declare, as a reason for this, that the spirit of man has a glory about it at birth which comes from the immortal world of souls, and is dimmed by the experiences of earthly life. So he breaks out in the wonderful lines:

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home."

Now Wordsworth did not have a reasoned-out theory of a spiritual life before birth, as he was careful to explain to inquirers. "It is far too shadowy a notion," he said, to be urged upon people as a belief; but has "sufficient foundation in humanity,"—that is, in men's emotions, aspirations, and imaginations,—"for authorizing me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could *as a poet*."

We see, then, how in these four instances, which are typical of what might be multiplied from all the great poets, the poetic imagination not only reproduces the remembered images of the senses, but compares them by new methods suggested by the emotions, combines them into new vivid wholes, and leaps to conclusions which remind us of the laborious conclusions of the reason, yet are quite different both in method and results. It is this faculty that makes the great poets akin to the prophets and teachers of the race: for they not only recover for us our forever fleeting pleasures of the senses, but interpret these in a way that reveals the hidden significance of life.

New combinations and interpretations made by the imagination.

The word Fancy is often, and very naturally, confused with the word Imagination. Originally both meant very nearly, if not quite, the same thing, being applied to illusions of the senses and also to the images raised in the mind by poetry and art. But their history has led them apart, and the term Imagina-

Fancy as an aspect of imagination.

tion has gained dignity, while Fancy has lost it. In modern critical usage, especially as applied to poetry, fancy is applied to the process of reproducing and recombining images of a trifling, superficial, or transient character, made use of in the more playful and consciously decorative poetic styles; while imagination is reserved for the making of images which go to show the real nature of things, their spiritual values, and their permanent significance,—a process made use of in the most exalted and serious moods of the poet. A common example of this distinction is found in the saying that Shakspere's *Midsummer Night's Dream* is a product of the poetic fancy, especially the fairy creatures,—Oberon, Titania, Puck, and Robin Goodfellow; whereas the *Tempest,* in which the action and characters are equally remote from reality, but are presented with a dignity and a suggestion of deep significance quite different from the style of the earlier play, is a product of the imagination. Led by Coleridge and Wordsworth especially, writers often treat these two processes as entirely distinct; but so far as we are concerned with the terms in the analysis of poetry, fancy seems to be only one aspect of the imagination, separated for convenience in describing poetical methods and effects.

For discussions of the imagination, the student may be referred in the first place to any standard work on

psychology, where the relations of this faculty to the memory are discussed; for example, Sully's *Human Mind* (see especially vol. i, pp. 377–380). Sully suggests as a very brief definition of the creative imagination "a harmonising of facts in conformity with the needs of feeling." Of more extended psychological discussions the most important is Ribot's *Essay on the Creative Imagination*. From the literary standpoint, the imagination is discussed in recent works by Everett, in *Poetry, Comedy and Duty*, by Santayana, in the first essay in his volume called *Poetry and Religion*, and by Alexander in *Poetry and the Individual* (chap. v). Alexander suggests this definition of imaginative imagery: "spontaneous mental embodiments of senuous elements so synthesized as to possess an organic unity not to be distinguished from the units of real things." (p. 125.) But the standard discussions of the creative imagination are those of Leigh Hunt in *Imagination and Fancy*, of Wordsworth in his Preface of 1815, of Coleridge in the *Biographia Literaria*, and of Ruskin in *Modern Painters*. For the general reader Leigh Hunt's essay is perhaps the most valuable, chiefly from the abundance and excellence of the illustrative examples; and the edition of it made in 1893 by Professor A. S. Cook includes in an appendix the important passages from Wordsworth and Coleridge, as well as a related passage from Jean Paul Richter.

Significant passages from Wordsworth's Preface are these: "Imagination, in the sense of the word as giving title to a class of the following poems, has no reference to images that are merely a faithful copy, existing in the mind, of absent external objects; but is a word of higher import, denoting operations of

the mind upon those objects, and processes of creation or of composition, governed by certain fixed laws. . . . These processes of imagination are carried on either by conferring additional properties upon an object or abstracting from it some of those which it already possesses, and thus enabling it to re-act upon the mind which hath performed the process like a new existence. . . . The imagination also shapes and creates; and how? By innumerable processes; and in none does it more delight than in that of consolidating numbers into unity, and dissolving and separating unity into number,—alternations proceeding from, and governed by, a sublime consciousness of the soul in her own mighty and almost divine powers. . . . To aggregate and to associate, to evoke and to combine, belong as well to the imagination as to the fancy; but either the materials evoked and combined are different, or they are brought together under a different law, and for a different purpose. Fancy does not require that the materials which she makes use of should be susceptible of change in their constitution from her touch; and where they admit of modification, it is enough for her purpose if it be slight, limited, and evanescent. Directly the reverse of these are the desires and demands of the imagination. She recoils from everything but the plastic, the pliant, and the indefinite. . . . When the imagination frames a comparison, if it does not strike on the first presentation, a sense of the truth of the likeness, from the moment that it is perceived, grows—and continues to grow—upon the mind; the resemblance depending less upon outline of form and feature than upon expression and effect; less upon casual and outstanding than upon inherent and internal properties: moreover, the images invariably modify each other. The law under

which the processes of fancy are carried on is as capricious as the accidents of things, and the effects are surprising, playful, ludicrous, amusing, tender, or pathetic, as the objects happen to be appositely produced or fortunately combined. Fancy depends upon the rapidity and profusion with which she scatters her thoughts and images; trusting that their number, and the felicity with which they are linked together, will make amends for the want of individual value. . . . If she can win you over to her purpose, and impart to you her feelings, she cares not how unstable or transitory may be her influence, knowing that it will not be out of her power to resume it upon an apt occasion. But the imagination is conscious of an indestructible dominion;—the soul may fall away from it, not being able to sustain its grandeur; but, if once felt and acknowledged, by no act of any other faculty of the mind can it be relaxed, impaired, or diminished. Fancy is given to quicken and beguile the temporal part of our nature, imagination to incite and to support the eternal."

Leigh Hunt describes the imagination under seven kinds or degrees: "First, that which presents to the mind any object of circumstance in every-day life; second, that which presents real, but not every-day circumstances; third, that which combines character and events directly imitated from real life, with imitative realities of its own invention; fourth, that which conjures up things and events not to be found in nature; fifth, that which, in order to illustrate one image, introduces another" (as in figurative phrasing); "sixth, that which reverses this process, and makes a variety of circumstances take color from one," as when nature is made expressive of human emotions; "seventh, and last, that by which a single expression,

apparently of the vaguest kind, not only meets but surpasses in its effect the extremest force of the most particular description," which Hunt illustrates by the lines from *Christabel*:

> "Her gentle limbs did she undress,
> And lay down in her loveliness."

This classification, while suggestive, is obviously not logical. On the relation of Imagination and Fancy, Hunt observes that Fancy "is a younger sister of Imagination, without the other's weight of thought and feeling. Imagination indeed, purely so called, is all feeling; the feeling of the subtlest and most affecting analogies; the perception of sympathies in the natures of things, or in their popular attributes. Fancy is a sporting with their resemblance, real or supposed, and with airy and fantastical creations. . . . Imagination belongs to tragedy, or the serious muse; fancy to the comic. *Macbeth, Lear, Paradise Lost,* the poem of Dante, are full of imagination: the *Midsummer Night's Dream* and the *Rape of the Lock,* of fancy: *Romeo and Juliet,* the *Tempest,* the *Fairy Queen,* and the *Orlando Furioso,* of both. . . . Spenser has great imagination and fancy too, but more of the latter; Milton both also, the very greatest, but with imagination predominant; Chaucer the strongest imagination of real life, beyond any writers but Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare, and in comic painting inferior to none; Pope has hardly any imagination, but he has a great deal of fancy; Coleridge little fancy, but imagination exquisite. Shakespeare alone, of all poets that ever lived, enjoyed the regard of both in equal perfection."

The most important passages in Coleridge's ac-

count of the imagination are found in the *Biographia Literaria,* chapters iv, xii, and xiii. "The first and most important point to be proved is, that two conceptions perfectly distinct are confused under one and the same word, and (this done) to appropriate that word exclusively to one meaning, and the synonyme (should there be one) to the other. . . . In the present instance the appropriation has already begun, and been legitimated in the derivative adjective: Milton had a highly *imaginative,* Cowley a very *fanciful* mind. . . . To the faculty by which I had characterized Milton, we should confine the term *imagination;* while the other would be contradistinguished as *fancy.* Now were it once fully ascertained that this division is no less grounded in nature, than that of delirium from mania, or Otway's

'Lutes, lobsters, seas of milk, and ships of amber,'

from Shakespeare's

'What! have his daughters brought him to this pass?'

or from the preceding apostrophe to the elements; the theory of the fine arts, and of poetry in particular, could not, I thought, but derive some additional and important light."

"After a more accurate perusal of Mr. Wordsworth's remarks on the imagination, in his preface to the new edition of his poems, I find that my conclusions are not so consentient with his as, I confess, I had taken for granted. . . . If by the power of evoking and combining, Mr. Wordsworth means the same as, and no more than, I meant by the aggregative and associative, I continue to deny that it belongs at

all to the imagination; and I am disposed to conjecture that he has mistaken the co-presence of fancy with imagination for the operation of the latter singly." (The imagination Coleridge distinguishes as the "shaping and modifying power.")

"The imagination, then, I consider either as primary or secondary. The primary imagination I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree* and in the *mode* of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially *vital,* even as all objects (*as* objects) are essentially fixed and dead. Fancy, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with but fixities and definites. The fancy is indeed no other than a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space." The further exposition of the subject, promised as part of an essay "on the uses of the supernatural in poetry," Coleridge never achieved.

For the adequate understanding of the distinction between imagination and fancy, as developed by Coleridge and his contemporaries, far more study of its philosophical basis is necessary than can even be outlined in this book. The best discussion of the matter is that of Mr. J. Shawcross, in the Introduction to his recent edition of the *Biographia Literaria.* The following are among the more helpful of his comments:

"In the apprehension of beauty, therefore, the soul

projects itself into the outward forms of nature, and invests them with its own life. . . . The symbol, and the mind that interprets it, must partake in a common spiritual life. The imaginative interpretation of nature is a heightened consciousness, though still only a mediate consciousness of the presence of that life. . . . The symbol, while remaining distinct from the thing symbolized, is yet in some mysterious way interpenetrated by its being, and partakes of its reality. Such symbolism is the work of imagination, and an example of it is found in the poetry of the Hebrews, in which 'all objects have a life of their own, and yet partake of our life. In God . . . . they have their being.'" (pp. xxxix, xl.) The distinction drawn by Coleridge between "primary" and "secondary" imagination, Mr. Shawcross observes, "is evidently between the imagination as universally active in consciousness . . . and the same faculty in a heightened power as creative in a poetic sense. In the first case our exercise of the power is unconscious: in the second the will directs, though it does not determine, the activity of the imagination. . . . The ordinary consciousness, with no principle of unification, sees the universe as a mass of particulars: only the poet can depict this whole as reflected in the individual parts. It is in this sense (as Coleridge had written many years before) that to the poet 'each thing has a life of its own, and yet they have all our life.'" In the same connection he quotes the philosopher Schelling's remark that "every single work of art represents Infinity." (pp. lxvii, lxviii.) "If there is one motive common to all genuine poetic impulse, it is surely the desire to objectify, and in this object to know and love, all that in the individual experience has seemed worthy of detachment from the

fleeting personal life. It is at least possible that such was Coleridge's meaning, both in the *Biographia Literaria*, and when, years before, he had spoken of the imagination 'as a dim analogue of creation.'" (p. lxxv.)

Ruskin's account of the imagination cannot well be represented by brief extracts. His fundamental statement is to the effect that "the Imagination has three totally distinct functions. It combines, and by combination creates new forms. . . . Again, it treats, or regards, both the simple images and its own combinations in peculiar ways; and, thirdly, it penetrates, analyzes, and reaches truths by no other faculty discoverable." These three types of imagination he calls "Combining or Associative," "Regardant or Contemplative," and "Analytic or Penetrative." All three are expounded at length in the succeeding chapters. Ruskin also distinguished between Fancy and Imagination; for example: "The fancy sees the outside, and is able to give a portrait of the outside, clear, brilliant, and full of detail. The imagination sees the heart, and inner nature, and makes them felt, but is often obscure, mysterious, and interrupted, in its giving of outer detail." "Fancy, as she stays at the externals, can never feel. She is one of the hardest-hearted of the intellectual faculties. . . . She cannot be made serious, no edge-tools but she will play with. Whereas the Imagination is in all things the reverse. She cannot be but serious; she sees too far, too darkly, too solemnly, too earnestly, ever to smile." But in the introduction to the revised edition of this part of *Modern Painters* (1883), Ruskin said: "The reader must be warned not to trouble himself with the distinctions . . . between Fancy and Imagination. The subject is jaded, the matter of it insignificant, and

the settlement of it practically impossible. . . . I am myself now entirely indifferent which word I use; and should say of a work of art that it was well 'fancied,' or well 'invented,' or well 'imagined,' with only some shades of different meaning in the application of the terms, rather dependent on the matter treated, than the power of mind involved in the treatment."

Students of these various discussions who do not seek to penetrate the deeper meaning of the philosophical doctrine of the Imagination, will for the most part tend to agree with Ruskin's later view. Psychology recognizes no distinction, as such, between this faculty and the "Fancy;" and from the standpoint of literary criticism it is probably sufficient, as has already been suggested, to regard the latter as but one aspect of the imagination, discriminated at times because it deals with different materials or for different ends.

Beauty as an element of poetry.

In the next place we have to consider the place of Beauty in poetry. This term, which is even more difficult to define than Imagination, was omitted from our definition, except so far as implied in the latter word; but in the definitions of some critics it is given an important place. That sense of satisfaction which we feel in anything which we call beautiful is certainly akin to the satisfaction which we feel in works of art, poetry included. And if we compare these works of art with the objects in nature which in some degree they represent, we see that the artist seizes upon the beautiful, rejects the

unbeautiful, and moreover makes the beautiful still more beautiful by the form in which he represents it. Clearly this, then, is one of the great uses of the imagination, as we have discussed it in the preceding paragraphs; by its power of adding and rejecting, of combining, of carrying out a process of the senses to some point of interior perception which the senses cannot reach of themselves, it separates and develops the beautiful as discovered in the outer world. Still further, from the countless imperfect beauties of the world it is led to conceive of a more perfect beauty than the world can show; just as Shelley's lark suggested not only various visible and audible beauties, but an "unbodied joy" beyond them all, and as Wordsworth's memory of the beautiful impressions of his childhood suggested a region of spiritual beauty and joy of which the earthly life furnished only a dimmed and fleeting aspect.

Not only does poetry—like the other arts—deal with beauty as its material, and reveal it beyond what is otherwise perceived, but it works by the *method* of beauty in its form and style. The poet may linger on a matter which is not essential to his purpose, as one may linger by the roadside to pick flowers or watch the clouds, when not too hurried on one's errand, simply for the beauty that he can indulge in by the way; and he will choose his words, his sentences, his structure, his rhythms and rimes, to the same end.

Beauty as affecting poetic style.

In other words, he takes our ordinary prose speech, crude and homely as it commonly is,—just as he takes his scenes and subjects,—and transfigures it to something which we recognize as the same and yet as a new and beautiful creation. (This matter, so far as it concerns external form, will be further discussed in chapter iv.)

Beauty a very inclusive term.

But we must notice further that for this purpose the word beautiful is to be understood in a somewhat different and wider sense from that in which we commonly use it. Otherwise what of such a poetical passage as that in the *Faerie Queene,* describing the foul monster Error, from whose mouth there flowed

> "A flood of poison horrible and black, . . .
> With loathly frogs and toads, which eyes did lack,
> And creeping sought way in the weedy grass"?

Or of Browning's Caliban, lying

> "Flat on his belly in the pit's much mire,
> With elbows wide, fists clenched to prop his chin"?

Here we have deliberate ugliness, not only in subject-matter but in style. And the same problem, carried further, will lead us to the revolting themes of suffering and sin, such as we have already considered briefly in connection with tragedy. Such matters raise very deep questions, over which we cannot pause for the present purpose. It is enough

to notice that, just as we saw that there is a strange pleasure derived from the contemplation of pain, when presented under proper poetical conditions, so there is a strange beauty perceived in ugliness, under proper conditions. Sometimes we may regard it as beautiful only because it sets off more strikingly the beauty of other objects with which it is associated; sometimes because it seems that any object of creation may be beautiful if portrayed in a way to set forth its real character and significance; sometimes, again, because the ugly object has a place in the development of some great beautiful whole which the poet is creating. All three of these explanations are illustrated by the hideous, grinning gargoyles with which the mediæval architects decorated their cathedrals, and which—almost infinitely ugly in themselves—both contrast with and contribute to the great totality of beauty and worship for which the cathedral stands. The test of beauty, then, is not in the form or nature of an object or a theme, but in the impression of satisfaction which it produces as presented by the artist.

We are now led very naturally to our next question, which has to do with the relation of poetry to Truth. All that can be said on this matter is directly deducible from what we have already discussed. In the first chapter we saw that poetry is to be contrasted with science, as not concerned for truth in the literal or objective sense in which science is concerned for it.

The relation of poetry to truth.

It uses external facts just as far as it chooses, adding to or subtracting from them whenever its purpose will serve. The reason for this was explained by Bacon, in the passage already quoted: "the world," he said, is "in proportion"—that is, in symmetry or perfection of form—"inferior to the soul; by reason whereof there is agreeable to the spirit of man a more ample greatness, a more exact goodness, and a more absolute variety than can be found in the nature of things." And Bacon was no doubt only echoing what he had read in Aristotle, the first of writers on poetry, that "poetry is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history," because—as he explained—history is limited to particular facts, while poetry deals with the *universal* truths which particular facts only partially represent. Shelley set forth the same thought in these words: "There is this difference between a story and a poem, that a story * is a catalogue of detached facts, which have no other connection than time, place, circumstance, cause and effect; the other is the creation of actions according to the unchangeable forms of human nature, as existing in the mind of the Creator, which is itself the image of all other minds. . . . A story of particular facts is as a mirror which obscures and distorts that which should be beautiful: poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted."

* By *story* he means a narrative of facts.

It is evident from this use of the word "beautiful" that Shelley has in mind what we already considered—the fact that the imagination forms from the numberless facts presented by the senses an ideal greater and more satisfying than any of them; this is what is meant both by ideal beauty and by universal truth. Now are these the same thing? Can we accept the saying of Keats, drawn from his reflections on the Grecian urn, that "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty"? Certainly not, if we have in mind mere beauty of form. Not only is the ugly to be accepted as having its place in the world, as we have seen is true even in poetry, but we know that many of the finest and truest things in life are presented to us in a form that does not appeal at all to what we call the æsthetic sense,—the sense of beauty of form. It was even written of the Man of Sorrows, as foreseen by the prophet: "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." But if we mean by beauty that eternal sense of inward perfection which the spirit of man is ever seeking after, and imagining as suggested and foreshadowed by the things of the visible world, then we may think it possible—though we cannot certainly say—that beauty fully revealed would be the same thing as truth fully known. We may say, at any rate, that the greatest poets have had for their aim something which, though it includes the

Are beauty and truth identical?

giving of pleasure to the senses, is akin to the aim of scientists and philosophers in their search for truth.

When, then, or to what extent, can we speak of poetry as truthful? When it is true to human experience in general, when it awakens genuine emotions, and when it sets forth true ideals of the imagination. Perhaps no more suggestive example of the difference between objective and poetical truth could be found than the figure of King Arthur, hero of British legendry, who passed from the place of a personage in national tradition to that of the central figure in a great imaginative cycle of romance. Now, through the researches of scientific historians, he has been relegated to the place of a successful tribal chieftain on the Welsh borders, doubtless a thorough barbarian, not to say pagan. Yet we easily dismiss this historic Arthur from our minds, admitting him to be objectively true, and there remains living with us instead the other figure of the Arthur of the *Idylls of the King*, ideal leader of an ideal host of Christian chivalry, whose conflicts with inner and outer foes are forever typical of "sense at war with soul."

When is poetry truthful?

It is because of its function of presenting these universal and ideal truths that poets have commonly been regarded—despite the fact that they write to give pleasure to themselves and to others—as having a

Poetry as a teacher of man.

place beside prophets and teachers of the race. Thus Shelley was led to say: "Poetry is indeed something divine. It is at once the centre and circumference of knowledge; . . . at the same time the root and blossom of all other systems of thought." And Wordsworth: "Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; . . . the poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion." And Emerson: "The only teller of news is the poet. When he sings, the world listens with the assurance that now a secret of God is to be spoken." In all these sayings the emphasis is evidently on that ideal truth which we have seen it is the business of poetry to reveal.

No poet has spoken on the subject of the relation of art to truth more clearly than Browning. In leaving it, let us notice two suggestive passages from his works. In the first he tells us that Art may be called

> "the love of loving, rage
> Of knowing, seeing, feeling the absolute truth of things
> For truth's sake, whole and sole, not any good truth brings
> The knower, seer, feeler." (*Fifine at the Fair,* xliv.)

In the other, at the close of his greatest poem, *The Ring and the Book,* he imagines one asking him—

"Why take the artistic way to prove so much?"

and answers:

"Because, it is the glory and good of Art
That Art remains the one way possible
Of speaking truth, to mouths like mine at least."

A particular truth about a particular man, he goes on to say, is likely to be misunderstood and to fail of its purpose; art is addressed not to individual *men,* but "to mankind," and tells "a truth obliquely."

"So you may paint your picture, twice show truth,
Beyond mere imagery on the wall,—
So, note by note, bring music from your mind,
Deeper than ever e'en Beethoven dived,—
So write a book shall mean beyond the facts,
Suffice the eye—and save the soul beside."

On the subject of the beautiful and the ideal as related to poetry the student will find valuable discussions in Butcher's *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry,* Hegel's remarks on the Ideal as related to Art, Emerson's essay on *Poetry and Imagination,* Wordsworth's Prefaces, Knight's *Philosophy of the Beautiful* (Pt. II, chap. viii), Santayana's *Poetry and Religion,* and Alexander's *Poetry and the Individual.*

Important passages from Hegel are these: "Man, then, shut in on every hand in the finite, and aspiring to pass out of it, turns his glance toward a higher sphere, truer and purer, where all the conflicts and contradictions of the finite disappear, where liberty,

expanding without obstacles or limits, attains its supreme end. This is the region of art, and of its reality, the ideal. The necessity of the beautiful in art and poetry arises, then, from the imperfections of the real. The mission of art is to represent, under sensible forms, the free development of life and especially of the spirit. It is only then that the true is detached from accidental and ephemeral circumstances, delivered from the law which condemns it to run the course of finite things. . . .

"Truth in art, then, is not mere fidelity, as implied in the definition 'imitation of nature.' It consists in the perfect expression of the *idea* which art manifests and realizes. . . . It is exclusively the function of the ideal to place exterior form in harmony with the soul,—to bring together exterior reality and spiritual nature, so that external appearance shall conform to the spirit of which it is the manifestation. But this spiritualizing process, even in poetry, does not go so far as to present the general idea under its abstract form; it stops at the intermediate point, where purely sensible form and pure spirit meet and agree. Art is found at that precise point of mediation where the idea, not being able to develop under its abstract or general form, stands enclosed in an individual reality." (Bénard, vol. i, pp. xi–xiii.)

The last of these sentences reminds us of the exaggeration of the doctrine of the "universal" as the theme of art, now recognized as characteristic of the neo-classical period, at its height in England in the eighteenth century. Sir Joshua Reynolds represents this doctrine, both in his *Discourses on Painting* and in the papers which he contributed to the *Idler* (Nos. 76, 79, 82), which are a plea for generalization. Since art is based on the universal or ideal, it is at its best

when it has "the least of common nature;" the source of beauty is the discarding of particulars and the discovery of the typical or general form. Students will find it profitable to compare the portraits of Reynolds, in illustration of this, with those of an individualist like George Frederick Watts. In Dr. Johnson's remarks on the style of Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis* we get a clue to the way in which the same doctrine led to the avoidance of concrete diction so characteristic of the neo-classical poetry. "It is a general rule," he observes, "in poetry that all appropriated terms of art should be sunk in general expressions, because poetry is to speak an universal language." The danger of the doctrine lay in its fundamental correctness as to the principle of ideality, without the caution, as indicated by Hegel, that this ideality is nevertheless to be expressed in terms of individual reality.

Has poetry a special kind of subject matter?

Our next question has to do with the relation of what we have been considering to the subject-matter of poetry: is there any class of themes with which it characteristically deals, and are there other classes which are excluded from its territory? At first thought one is likely to try to define some limitations of this sort, because of a general impression that poetry treats as a rule only lofty or dignified themes, more particularly such as love, beauty, and faith, and avoids the low and the commonplace. Yet further reflection will perhaps suggest that what we have in mind is not so much the subject-matter of the poet, as it is what he makes of that subject-matter; and the weight of the testimony of the critics is

against limiting him at all in the choice of material. Thus Leigh Hunt says of poetry, after defining it as "the utterance of a passion for truth, beauty, and power," that "its means are whatever the universe contains." And Emerson says of the poet: "There is no subject that does not belong to him,— politics, economy, manufactures and stockbrokerage, as much as sunsets and souls; only, these things, placed in their true order, are poetry; displaced, or put in kitchen order, they are unpoetic." (*Poetry and Imagination.*) In both cases the inference is that what we call *poetical* is not an attribute of objects in themselves, but of the treatment they receive, the purpose of him who handles them, and the result of his work.

No limits to poetic material.

It is clear that there are certain objects which we instinctively feel are more susceptible of poetical treatment than others: flowers rather than potatoes, sunshine rather than electric light, sailing vessels rather than steamships, horses rather than automobiles. Analyzing our feeling a little further, we see that we are more likely to attach imaginative conceptions to things which are obviously beautiful than to those which are merely useful, and to things which are distant in place or time than to those recent and familiar; for this reason all the fine arts deal more largely with the former classes than with the latter. But after all, a poet may at any time show the imaginative possibilities of objects in the

other classes. The poets of Shakspere's time—including even Shakspere himself—held that for great poems great personages and their emotions were the most fitting material,—kings, princes, and others obviously impressive and heroic. There is no tragedy earlier than the modern period treating of the sufferings of lowly people in familiar life. But this opinion has changed. Wordsworth in *Michael,* Tennyson in *Dora,* Browning in *The Ring and the Book,* have shown that the elements of tragedy and of poetry are the same for persons of any class.* Again, it is common to say that for the poet the sun still rises and sets; that the modern scientific notion of the earth going round the sun, with all the other planets, has no place in poetry. Yet Tennyson has used this modern notion in one of the loveliest of his lyrics:

"Move eastward, happy earth, and leave
Yon orange sunset waning slow:
From fringes of the faded eve,
O happy planet, eastward go. . . .

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,
Dip forward under starry light,

* The tendency is still to prefer dignified persons and themes for the matter of tragedy, and there is no doubt that to make tragic poetry of those of low life is a very difficult problem; Tennyson's *Promise of May* is an instance of such an experiment, far from successful. But there has been too little poetic tragedy in modern English literature to enable one to generalize as to its normal development.

And move me to my marriage-morn,
And round again to happy night."

Once more, we are accustomed to think of machinery—both because it is less beautiful in itself than more natural processes, and because its associations are so familiar and sordid—as shut out from poetry and the other arts. But Kipling, in one of his most interesting poems, *McAndrew's Hymn,* has refuted this idea both in precept and example. The theme is the steam-engine that drives the ocean liner, whose unerring and majestic movements suggest to the Scotch engineer not only

"Law, order, duty and restraint, obedience, discipline,"

but the very majesty of the ordained movements of the universe according to a predestinating Mind.* And—as if to scorn some imagined critic of this unpromising material—the poet represents the engineer as relating the question of a conventionally superficial passenger, who asks if he does not think "that steam has spoiled romance at sea." Following up the contemptuous reply to this, we have the petition—

"God send a man like Robbie Burns to sing the song of steam!"

* Compare the sonnet by Charles Tennyson on *A Steam Threshing Machine*, which suggested to him "mind and matter, will and law."

This in itself is full of suggestion. Burns, though writing before the age of steam, had widened the field of poetry to include the field-mouse, the jolly beggar,—any of the least of God's creatures; McAndrew feels instinctively that it is of the same spirit to widen the field of poetry so as to include all the new forces of modern life.

The two methods of poetic treatment.

We may conclude, therefore, that the material of poetry, if it does not embrace whatever the universe contains, admits whatever may be seized by the imagination and made to appeal to the emotions; and we should be very slow to mark anything as outside this possibility. It is true that certain great and obviously imaginative themes,—the same that we call "romantic" in character, such as love, war, faith, and death,—will no doubt always remain the chief themes of poetry; yet even these themes may be found in almost any corner of life. In this connection we may recall that great saying of Coleridge, as to the purpose which he and Wordsworth had in writing the *Lyrical Ballads,* a book which was the forerunner of a whole new age of ideas of poetry: one aim, as exemplified especially in *The Ancient Mariner,* was to treat romantic and unfamiliar objects "yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith;" the

other, exampled especially in the narrative poems of Wordsworth, was "to give the charm of novelty to things of every day," and awaken feelings no less romantic than those suggested by the unfamiliar or even the supernatural, by directing the mind "to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us." (*Biog. Lit.*, chap. xiv.) One or the other of these tasks is always before the poet, and between the two it is no wonder if all the objects of experience are included in his material.

Of the various discussions of the appropriate subject-matter of poetry, the most interesting is that aroused by the controversy between Rev. Samuel Bowles and Lord Byron, in connection with the poetry of Pope. A good account of it may conveniently be found in Beers's *Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century*, chap. ii; the principal contribution of Byron to the discussion is reprinted in Rhys's *Literary Pamphlets*, vol. ii. Bowles's chief doctrine was summarized in the statement that "all images drawn from what is beautiful or sublime in the works of nature are more beautiful and sublime than any images drawn from art, and they are therefore *per se* (abstractedly) more poetical." Byron, on the other hand, maintained that objects of art are quite as poetical, *per se*, as objects of nature; that the Parthenon is more poetical than the rock on which it stands, and that if Bowles were correct, a pig scudding before a gale of wind would be more poetical than a ship scudding before the gale. As Professor Beers justly observes, the whole discussion was futile; the distinction between objects of nature and of art cannot be drawn with critical accuracy, and in any case no object is either poetical or the

contrary in itself. More important, though no less unsatisfactory, was the contention of Wordsworth that persons and objects of humble and rustic life form the most fitting subject of poetry, "because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and consequently may be more accurately contemplated and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings; . . . and lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature." (Pref. to *Lyrical Ballads.*)

Has poetry a special style?

In the last place, we have to inquire what is the relation of the matters we have been considering to the *style* of poetry. Fundamentally the question arises whether the style of poetry is to be regarded as different from that of prose,—a question to which different answers have been made by different critics, and to which the safest reply is probably this: the style of poetry does not differ *necessarily* from that of prose, since both are made up of human speech dealing with the objects of human experience; but, as a result of the emotional and imaginative qualities of poetry, its style shows certain tendencies of its own which deserve separate consideration. This may be conveniently illustrated by considering certain passages.

"And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,
There by the light of this old lamp they sat,

Father and son, while far into the night
The housewife plied her own peculiar work."*

"A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light." †

"What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth?
Most men eddy about
Here and there—eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurled in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing; and then they die." ‡

"Then none was for a party;
Then all were for the state;
Then the great man helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great:
Then lands were fairly portioned;
Then spoils were fairly sold:
The Romans were like brothers
In the brave days of old." **

In all these there is not a word and not a phrase which is in any way characteristic of poetry; destroy the rhythm and the rime, and you will have a series of sen- The "neutral" style.

* Wordsworth: *Michael.*
† Wordsworth: *She was a Phantom of Delight.*
‡ Arnold: *Rugby Chapel.*
** Macaulay: *Horatius.*

tences such as might occur in any prose passage on a similar subject. This is the style which Coleridge called "neutral," equally appropriate for prose or poetry. But one could not easily find an entire poem in this style. If we look a little further, for example, in the poem from which the first passage was taken, we find:

"And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up
A healthy lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old."

Or in the third poem, this:

"No one asks
Who or what they have been,
More than he asks what waves,
In the moonlit solitudes mild
Of the midmost ocean, have swelled,
Foamed for a moment, and gone."

Or in the fourth:

"Meanwhile the Tuscan army,
Right glorious to behold,
Came flashing back the noonday light,
Rank behind rank, like surges bright
Of a broad sea of gold."

In these passages, though there may be few words or phrases which cannot be imagined as occurring in legitimate prose, yet we feel at once that the style is distinctive of poetry.

On the other hand, consider such passages as these: The prosaic style.

"And he is lean and he is sick;
His body, dwindled and awry,
Rests upon ankles swol'n and thick;
His legs are thin and dry."*

"I've measured it from side to side,
'Tis three feet long, and two feet wide." †

"Only the ass, with motion dull,
Upon the pivot of his skull
Turns round his long left ear." ‡

"'Thus sanctioned,'
The pastor said, 'I willingly confine
My narratives to subjects that excite
Feelings with these accordant; love, esteem,
And admiration. . . .
And yet there are,
I feel, good reasons why we should not leave
Wholly untraced a more forbidding way.
For strength to persevere and to support,
And energy to conquer and repel—
These elements of virtue, that declare
The native grandeur of the human soul—

* Wordsworth: *Simon Lee.*

† Wordsworth: *The Thorn.*

These verses were altered in the revised edition of Wordsworth's poems, so as to read:

"Though but of compass small, and bare
To thirsty suns and parching air."

‡ Wordsworth: *Peter Bell.*

Are ofttimes not unprofitably shown
In the perverseness of a selfish course.'" *

In all which we discover a style that is felt to be more appropriate to prose than to poetry, one which arouses a feeling of surprise, perhaps annoyance, at finding it conjoined with the verse form. The reasons for these impressions each reader will do well to try to discover for himself.

The illustrations of style inappropriate to poetry were chosen from Wordsworth in order to suggest the discussion, here naturally in place, of his theory of poetic diction, as compared with his practice. This theory was largely due to two things: his desire to present his own emotions to his readers as directly as possible, and his dislike of the conventionalized "poetic diction" of the eighteenth century, overlaid as a decoration upon natural speech. The most significant passages from his discussion of the subject are these:

"The language, too, of these men" (i. e., those of humble rural life) "has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike and disgust), because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank and society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical

* Wordsworth: *The Excursion.*

language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by poets." "The reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes, and are utterly rejected as an ordinary device to elevate the style and raise it above prose. My purpose was to imitate, and, as far as is possible, to adopt the very language of men; and assuredly such personifications do not make any natural or regular part of that language. . . . There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called poetic diction; as much pains has been taken to avoid it as is ordinarily taken to produce it; this has been done for the reason already alleged, to bring my language near to the language of men." "It may be safely affirmed that there neither is, nor can be, any *essential* difference between the language of prose and metrical composition. . . . The language of such poetry as is here recommended is, as far as is possible, a selection of the language really spoken by men; [and] this selection, wherever it is made with true taste and feeling, will of itself form a distinction far greater than would at first be imagined, and will entirely separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life. . . . What is a Poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him? He is a man speaking to men. . . . It will be the wish of the Poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time, perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs: modifying only the language which is thus suggested to him by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure. Here, then, he will apply the principle of selection which has been already insisted

upon. He will depend upon this for removing what would otherwise be painful or disgusting in the passion; he will feel that there is no necessity to trick out or to elevate nature: and the more industriously he applies this principle the deeper will be his faith that no words which *his* fancy or imagination can suggest will be to be compared with those which are the emanations of reality and truth." (Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads.*) In the Appendix on "Poetic Diction" occurs this concluding summary of "a principle which has been my chief guide in all I have said,—namely, that in works of *imagination and sentiment,* for of these only have I been treating, in proportion as ideas and feelings are valuable, whether the composition be in prose or verse, they require and exact one and the same language."

It will be observed that in many accounts of Wordsworth's theory of the language of poetry his cautious modifications of the general statement that it does not differ from that of prose have been neglected. It is to be in "*a selection* of the language really spoken by men;" the painful and disgusting, the vulgar and the mean, will be excluded; and it is only *in works of imagination and sentiment* that prose and verse style are alike. Due consideration of these matters will perhaps lead us to question whether the common saying is correct, that Wordsworth's poetry was successful only in so far as he abandoned his theory.

Coleridge's reply to this Preface, and his critique of the poems especially concerned with it, are found in chapters xvii-xx of the *Biographia Literaria,* the last of the chapters being headed: "Language of metrical composition, why and wherein essentially different from that of prose." Perhaps the most suggestive passages are these:

"Now I will take the first stanza on which I have chanced to open in the Lyrical Ballads. It is one of the most simple and peculiar in its language:

'In distant countries I have been,
And yet I have not often seen
A healthy man, a man full grown,
Weep in the public roads, alone.
But such a one, on English ground,
And in the broad highway, I met;
Along the broad highway he came,
His cheeks with tears were wet.
Sturdy he seemed, though he was sad,
And in his arms a lamb he had.'

The words here are doubtless such as are current in all ranks of life: and of course not less so in the hamlet and cottage, than in the shop, manufactory, college, or palace. But is this the order in which the rustic would have placed the words? I am grievously deceived, if the following less compact mode of commencing the same tale be not a far more faithful copy. 'I have been in many parts far and near, and I don't know that I ever saw before a man crying by himself in the public road: a grown man I mean, that was neither sick nor hurt,' etc., etc. But when I turn to the following stanza in The Thorn:

'At all times of the day and night
This wretched woman thither goes,
And she is known to every star
And every wind that blows:
And there beside the thorn she sits,
When the blue day-light's in the skies:
And when the whirlwind's on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still;

And to herself she cries,
Oh misery! Oh misery!
Oh woe is me! Oh misery!'

and compare this with the language of ordinary men, or with that which I can conceive at all likely to proceed, in real life, from such a narrator as is supposed in the note to the poem—compare it either in the succession of the images or of the sentences—. . . I reflect with delight how little a mere theory, though of his own workmanship, interferes with the processes of genuine imagination in a man of true poetic genius." "Metre in itself is simply a stimulant to the attention, and therefore excites the question, Why is the attention to be thus stimulated? . . . Neither can I conceive any other answer that can be rationally given, short of this: I write in metre, because I am about to use a language different from that of prose." "Now poetry, Mr. Wordsworth truly affirms, does always imply passion: which word must be here understood, in its most general sense, as an excited state of the feelings and faculties. And as every passion has its proper pulse, so will it likewise have its characteristic modes of expression. . . . Lastly, I appeal to the practice of the best poets, of all countries and in all ages, as authorizing the opinion (deduced from all the foregoing) that in every import of the word essential, which would not here involve a mere truism, there may be, is, and ought to be, an essential difference between the language of prose and of metrical composition."*

In general, criticism has accepted this as the final word on the subject. Of late Professor Raleigh, in

* In the last of the four chapters (xx) Coleridge develops his view of the "neutral style" or *lingua communis*.

his book on Wordsworth, has further developed the discussion, pointing out that the defect in Wordsworth's theory and in his (occasional) practice was due to an inadequate appreciation of the suggestive or connotative power of language. "Wordsworth's devotion to the mere fact, his fixed and jealous gaze on truth, brought him into difficulties and dangers unlike those which beset poets who indulge the imagination with a freer course. The mere fact said everything to him; the dates on a tombstone spoke eloquently; and a parish register, without addition, touched the spring of sympathy and tears. But the mere fact, which says everything, comes perilously near also to saying nothing. A parish register is not in itself a poem; and the poet who aims at a similar economy of matter, while he avoids all the flowery enticements that allure weaker feet, is likely enough to fall out of poetry on the other side. . . . Wordsworth found that language, the instrument of poetry, which had played other poets false, was not true to him; that words were deceitful, clumsy, unmanageable, and tricky. . . . The thing to be expressed, even at its simplest, is far beyond the limited compass of the instrument, and, save by partial indications, can no more be interpreted in words than a symphony can be rendered upon the flute." "His reason for choosing humble and rustic life as his academy of language was thus, like the rest of his theory of poetry, purely mystical. He knew no dialect, and did not trouble himself to acquire one. His strongest motive appears clearly in the short sentence where he says that in a humble condition of life 'men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived.' Coleridge made short work of this philological theory. But its interest remains; for it shows that the best part

of language, to Wordsworth's mind, was to be found in the mere names of natural objects. . . . Another society, which uses a language greater, more passionate, and purer than the language of the shepherds of the Lakes, was, in his theory at least, overlooked by Wordsworth—the society of poets, living and dead. It is they who preserve language from pollution and enrich it with new powers. They redeem words from degradation by a single noble employment. They establish a tradition that bridges over the treacherous currents and quicksands of time and fashion. And they were Wordsworth's masters, though he pays them scant acknowledgment." (*Wordsworth*, pp. 115-122.)

Sources of the qualities of poetical style.

With this much clear, then, that there are styles peculiarly appropriate to poetry, peculiarly inappropriate to poetry, and neutral in respect to poetry and prose, let us try to analyze a little more definitely the qualities of characteristically poetical style. All these qualities will be found to be, not conventional devices, by which poets have agreed to decorate the language of their poems, but direct results of the emotional and imaginative elements of the art.

Concreteness.

The most striking quality of the style of poetry is its *concreteness*. Despite the fact that it deals with themes of universal or general significance, it avoids general or abstract words. Indeed this is so much more than a mere device of style,—is so much a part of the imaginative presentation of the material of

poetry,—that some critics include it as essential to the very definition of poetry. Thus Theodore Watts, after defining poetry as "the *concrete* and artistic expression of the human mind in emotional and rhythmical language," adds this comment: "With abstractions the poet has nothing to do, save to take them and turn them into concretions."* And Masson defines the poetic or imaginative faculty as "the power of intellectually producing a new or artificial concrete," and poetry itself as "cogitation in the language of concrete circumstance." The plastic arts, and in a sense the art of music, cannot by their very nature deal with the abstract; poetry, made up of words, has that power, and most readers would probably agree that sometimes it may use it wisely and well; but it certainly tends always to avoid the abstract because of the characteristically intellectual—as contrasted with imaginative—character of that type of speech. The chosen word of the poet is first of all the word which will recall the most vivid image to the imaginary impressions of the senses:† he will prefer "daybreak" to "early morning," because of its appeal to the inner eye, or

* That Mr. Watts exaggerates this aspect may perhaps be inferred from the example which he quotes from George Eliot, "Speech is but broken light upon the depth of the unspoken," objecting to the phrase "the unspoken" as abstract and therefore prosaic.

† So Grant Allen points out, in his *Physiological Æsthetics*, that the poets show a preference for the more vivid color-words, such as *crimson*, *azure*, and the like.

perhaps may choose "cock-crow," with its similar appeal to the inner ear. Even when the thought dealt with is of a profoundly intellectual and generalized character, as in this passage from *In Memoriam*,—

"Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

"That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

"That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

"Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring;"—

in such a passage, then, we see how the generalization is made to pass before us in a series of concrete images,—"goal," "taints of blood," "aimless feet," "rubbish," "pile," "worm cloven," "moth shrivelled," winter changing to spring. So true is this that when poetry forsakes altogether the concrete image-making style, we feel instinc-

tively that it is losing its vital element and fading into an illegitimate literary form.

This concreteness, this detail, we may further notice, is more often devoted to the presentation of beauty than to any other element. In poetry the writer may linger—as was noticed in an earlier paragraph—over beautiful details, may heap up beautiful words, in a manner not essential to his main purpose, and to a degree which in a writer of prose would not be tolerated. When we read such a stanza as this from Keats's *Ode to Psyche*,—

Beauty in concrete detail.

"O latest born and loveliest vision far
Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy!
Fairer than Phoebe's sapphire-region'd star,
Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky;
Fairer than these, though temple hast thou none,
Nor altar heap'd with flowers;
Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan
Upon the midnight hours;
No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
From chain-swung censer teeming;
No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming,"—

it is difficult to believe that anything other than the sheer love of beautiful words for their own sake—that is, for the sake of the beauty of the images they awaken—will account for the progression of the style. And not only words beautiful because of the images for which they stand, but words beautiful

for their mere sound,—these also are favored by the poet, as will be further set forth in the next chapter.

The most important and largest aspect of the imaginative concreteness of poetical style is its use of what is called figured or figurative language,—language *turned,* by what are also called *tropes* or "*turnings,*" from its literal meaning to something allied to that meaning through an imaginative process.* The figures of poetry are no different from those of prose, and the study of them in detail belongs rather to rhetoric than to poetics; it is sufficient here to note how their characteristic quality—considered under their principal kinds—is to serve the power of the imagination to see resemblances where the reason does not find them, comparing and combining images and thus bringing out their real character and their emotional significance.

Figurative language.

The simplest, and what may be called the least poetical, of these figures, is the simile, in which a resemblance is stated;—least poetical, that is, as contrasted with the metaphor and allied figures, in which the resemblance is assumed by a more daring and intense imaginative process. That great series of similes in

The simile.

* Some rhetoricians distinguish between the trope and the figure; as, for example, Professor Gummere, in his *Handbook of Poetics:* "Poetical style is distinguished from ordinary style by the use (1) of a different kind, and (2) of a different *arrangement* of words. . . We call the first, which refers to the meaning, *Trope*; we call the second, which refers to the order, *Figure.*"

Shelley's *Skylark,* already discussed as illustrating imaginative processes, is sufficient evidence that the simpler figure may be used with great power. Of the fanciful type is a famous simile of Suckling's:

> "Her feet beneath her petticoat
> Like little mice stole in and out,
> As if they feared the light."
> (*Ballad upon a Wedding.*)

It would perhaps not be rash to say that the most majestic simile in modern poetry is that in Shelley's *Adonais:*

> "Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
> Stains the white radiance of eternity."

Half-way between simile and metaphor is the figure in which likeness is suggested by the phrasing, though not stated explicitly; as in Tennyson's

> "Men may rise on stepping-stones
> Of their dead selves to higher things,"

or Shakspere's

> "This royal throne of kings, this sceptered isle,
> This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
> This other Eden, demi-paradise,
> This fortress built by Nature for herself
> Against infection and the hand of war,
> This happy breed of men, this little world,

This precious stone set in the silver sea,
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England."

(*Richard II,* Act ii, sc. 1.)

A particular type is the epic simile, elaborated in a consciously decorative manner, and always—in modern poetry—frankly imitative of the style of the Homeric poems. A typical example is this from Milton:

"As when a scout,
Through dark and desert ways with peril gone
All night, at last by break of cheerful dawn
Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill,
Which to his eye discovers unaware
The goodly prospect of some foreign land
First seen, or some renowned metropolis
With glistening spires and pinnacles adorned,
Which now the rising sun gilds with his beams;—
Such wonder seized, though after Heaven seen,
The Spirit malign, but much more envy seized,
At sight of all this world beheld so fair."

(*Paradise Lost,* iii, 543 ff.)

More intensely poetical, as has been observed, is the metaphor, which fuses the two images into a new identity, allowing no time to the reason for inquiry whether to identify them is just. Three striking examples are incorporated in one stanza of Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra:*

The metaphor.

"Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,
This I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped."

Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar,* on the other hand, is a single complex metaphor elaborated almost to the point of allegory, in which sailor, voyage, ocean, and pilot are all fused imaginatively with the elements of the human experience for which they stand. When passion is intense, or utterance hurried, different metaphors may crowd one another even to the point of contradiction, as in the familiar "take up arms against a sea of troubles" of Hamlet's soliloquy.

The other types of figurative language which are important for poetry may be regarded as forms of the metaphor. Chief among them is personification, in which a lifeless object is clothed in the form or attributes of a living person. It is of constant occurrence in fleeting imagery, as when Milton calls the ocean "the remorseless deep," when Shakspere says: **Personification.**

"His coward lips did from their color fly,"

or Lowell:

"Earth gets its price for what Earth gives us."

In other cases the personification forms the substance of a whole poem, as in Gray's *Hymn to Adversity* ("Daughter of Jove,") Shelley's *Cloud* ("I am the daughter of earth and water,") and Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty* ("Stern daughter of the voice of God"). Of a somewhat different type are cases where the personification stands not so much for a lifeless object as for an entire group or class of persons, as in Gray's

"Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,"

or in Collins's *Ode to Evening,* in which Fancy, Friendship, Science and Health appear as figures in which the individuals possessed of those qualities are merged. Different, again,—though incidentally exemplified in the poems of Gray and Wordsworth cited above—is the personification of an abstract quality pure and simple, as in the lines—

"Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own."

These personifications of abstract qualities are particularly characteristic of eighteenth century poetry, and in it they often represent rather a conventional form of phrasing than a genuine metaphorical image. Thus, in the *Elegy,* such lines as

"Heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride,"

"Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,"

"If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,"

call up very faint images, if any, and might stand for purely abstract statements if the nouns in question were printed without capitals. Of quite another sort are the personifications in Collins's *Ode on the Passions,* in which Fear, Anger, Despair, Hope, and the rest, appear before us in vivid symbolic forms, which remind us of the mythologized abstractions, like the Furies, the Graces, and the Muses, of classical literature and art. Equally vivid is the personification of Autumn in Keats's ode,—a figure seen

"Sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind."

This figure of personification, when genuinely imaginative, takes us straight to the heart of poetry, especially that of primitive times, when the myth-making faculty was always busy with the objects of nature and the conceptions of the mind, and formed living images so like those of the real world that they were not only pictured, but feared, honored, and worshipped in turn.

Allegory.

The personification elaborated becomes allegory, in which a number of these personifications form the characters in epic or dramatic story, and react upon each

other both as abstract qualities and as symbolic figures. This form of art is especially characteristic of the mediæval period, when there was a strange fondness for the mystical presentation of spiritual truth in symbolic material form. In later times the fashion has disappeared very largely, modern taste being little disposed to enter into the intricate structure of allegorical composition, and modern criticism holding that personification—like other metaphors—is a figure to be apprehended in a single imaginative flash, rather than to be consciously elaborated. It is characteristic, then, that our great allegorical poems are of early periods; chief among them being, of the epic type, the *Piers Plowman* of the fourteenth century and Spenser's *Faerie Queene* of the sixteenth, and, of the dramatic type, the so-called "moralities," notably that entitled *Every Man.* The poetic allegory may also become satirical, as in Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel,* or it may be of the expository or didactic type, as in his *Hind and the Panther.*

Other figurative forms.

It remains to notice that there are certain forms of figurative phrasing closely allied to metaphor, in which one object is expressed by the figure of another because it has a particular associative relation to the latter. Typical instances are the passage in which Milton speaks of a table on which "all Autumn" is piled —"all Autumn" meaning all the fruits of Autumn, —and that in which Shakspere speaks of bringing

"white hairs unto a quiet grave."* These figures, unless unusually bold, are so slight in their image-making quality as to attract little attention, and are scarcely more characteristic of poetry than of prose. The same is true of other so-called figures, which are not based on imaginative imagery at all,—such as irony, antithesis, aposiopesis, etc. The figure of apostrophe, in which an object is directly addressed, is a form of personification when it has any imaginative significance at all.

A good account of figures of speech can be found in any standard work on rhetoric. For a convenient brief analysis of their kinds as related to poetry, see Gayley's Introduction to *The Principles of Poetry*, pp. xliii-xlix. Professor Gayley divides figures into (1) those which are poetical in the sense of representing a created image, (2) figures of logical artifice which appeal to the reason rather than the imagination, and (3) rhetorical figures which have to do with the ordering of words. It is interesting to note that, whereas formerly the metaphor was often treated as an abbreviated simile, it is now recognized as being the most primitive and purely natural of figures, connected with the myth-making faculty to which allusion has already been made. This indirect method of phrasing is constant, too, in the descriptive style of old English poetry,—as in the "kennings" or epithets conven-

* To these figures the terms *synecdoche* and *metonymy* are technically applied: the former, when the relation of the two objects is that of a whole and a part, the latter when it is more indirectly associative.

tionalized from metaphorical associations: "whale's bath" or "swan-road" for the sea, "battle-serpents" for arrows, "battle-gleam" for sword, etc.

Choice of words for emotional association.

The imaginative process, which finds its expression in this concreteness of the poetical style, is in good part the result of the emotional appeal which we have seen to be characteristic of the method of poetry. In another way this emotional element acts upon style: namely, by viewing words not only as means of presenting ideas or images, but as means of arousing feeling through association. This is of course not strictly a distinct matter from the other, for it must be by the images or ideas associated with them that words will arouse feeling; but when they do this by automatic and infinitely rapid associations, we may think of it as a matter by itself. All style, prosaic as well as poetic, involves a consideration of the fact that words do these two different things: they convey *meanings,* and they convey *suggestions.* The distinction is sometimes expressed by the statement that they have both "denotative" and "connotative" values. While the prose writer makes frequent use of the connotative values of words—their power of suggesting emotional relations—he has done his chief duty if he has chosen such words as mean exactly what he has to say; that is, words properly denotative of his ideas. But the poet, also dependent upon the denotative values of his words,

accomplishes his peculiar task in large part by choosing them for their connotative values,—their capacity to suggest the emotion to which he wishes to appeal. The defective style of certain passages quoted on an earlier page, characteristically unpoetical although appearing in poetry, appears to be due to a neglect of this connotative element. Describing the grave of a child, Wordsworth wished to give an impression of its pathetically small size, and used the words:

> "I've measured it from side to side,
> 'Tis three feet long, and two feet wide."

The picture presented to the mind's eye, and the denotative description of the grave, are precisely what he wished them to be; but unfortunately the words had a suggestive power which he could not escape,—their accuracy of measurement suggested an unemotional aspect of size, "described," to use Professor Dowden's words, "as if it had been studied by an undertaker." Hence, when this had been pointed out by Coleridge and others, the poet felt obliged to destroy something of the exactness of the image, that its emotional value might be saved, and made the change to the words—"though but of compass small." Equally instructive is the change made in the revised version of *The Blind Highland Boy;* in the first version the boy had embarked on his strange voyage in

> "A household tub, like one of those
> Which women use to wash their clothes."

There was more trouble here than a bad rime; the household tub was too suggestive in the wrong direction, and was changed, on Coleridge's suggestion, to a turtle-shell.* On the other hand, consider the emotional suggestiveness of such a phrase as that by which Jonson describes the lily,—"the plant and flower of light," which can hardly be said to present any definite image, but has a vivid and invaluable associative power; or of the sudden outburst of a familiar word of vituperation in the lament of Tennyson's Œnone:

> "I wish that somewhere in the ruined folds, . . .
> Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her—
> The Abominable!"

—or of a word of repulsive association in connection with one giving a reverential, intensifying sanction to its use, in this line from *The Ancient Mariner:*

> "The very deep did rot: O Christ!"

In all these cases it is not the image aroused, for that is vague at best, but the marvelous associative

* See Dowden's Introduction to Wordsworth's Poems, Athenæum Press ed., p. xciii.

power of words to awaken the appropriate emotion, which produces the poet's desired effect.

A particular and common instance of this poetical use of words emotionally suggestive is the choice of antiquated diction, including such simple examples as the use of the obsolete second person singular, and such elaborate ones as the revived ballad style of *The Ancient Mariner*. That which is old has an emotional value, quite apart from anything else about it; and in English usage there is another circumstance giving a peculiar value to diction of the sixteenth century,—namely, that the standard version of the Bible is constantly read in that diction, as well as imitated in prayers and hymns; hence its power of associating reverential emotion is greatly intensified.

Antiquated diction.

In conclusion, then, we find that all these qualities of poetical style appear to be, as was predicted at the outset, direct results of the imaginative and emotional elements of poetry. With these in view, the poet reaches out for words which he would not otherwise use, rejects words which he would otherwise use, and uses still other words in transfigured meanings or in relations which give them new and almost limitless powers.

Before leaving the subject, we should perhaps notice that the style of poetry is not infrequently marked by irregularities which together go under the name of

Poetic license.

"poetic license,"—implying a certain freedom of conduct allowed to poets in vocabulary and phrasing, to compensate them for the exact requirements of rhythmical form. The most common of such licenses are the inversion of the natural order of words and the admission of the auxiliary verb "do" or "did" as a mere expletive to fill out the rhythm. Both are illustrated in the line—

"And they all dead did lie,"

from *The Ancient Mariner*. Other licenses include the forcing of rimes, or the use of antiquated or unusual forms of words for the sake of rime or rhythm. But all these licenses are admitted sparingly in modern poetry, and are to be reckoned as blemishes unless—as is not infrequently the case—the change from the normal choice of words or order of words has a certain stylistic value of its own.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BASIS OF POETRY (EXTERNAL).

We saw at the outset that poetry is characterized by two elements, one having to do with its imaginative nature, the other with its metrical form. The former was considered in the preceding chapter; the latter is now to be examined, so far as concerns the fundamental character of rhythm as applied to human speech, and the reasons why it is an essential element of poetry.

Rhythm is a characteristic of movement in *time*, and hence of all the arts which are expressed in time rather than in space,—dancing, music, and poetry. Some writers speak of rhythm as also characteristic of the arts of space, using the term of such regularly recurrent elements as the pillars of a colonnade; but this is really to speak figuratively. There is a certain resemblance between the pleasure derived from regularity of space relations and that derived from regularity of time relations, but the two kinds of pleasure appeal to wholly different senses, and the elements of time which go to make up rhythm appeal primarily to the ear. We should, therefore, as has been said in an earlier chapter, think of verse

Rhythm defined.

as consisting of sounds rhythmically arranged, and of the words printed on the page as mere symbols of those sounds.

To go further toward a definition, rhythm occurs when sounds are divided into equal intervals of time and when these intervals are marked by stresses.* As soon as a group of sounds marked by these conditions is heard, the ear sets up a standard of rhythm of the character indicated—that is, with time divisions of that particular length—and attempts to refer to it all succeeding sounds, until the rhythm is broken off so completely as to be lost. More than this, so eager is the ear to enjoy the sensation of rhythm, that it imagines the necessary elements even where they are not actually present. Thus if we hear a steam piston driving regular strokes outside our window, we are likely to imagine a difference in the stress of those strokes, so as to arrange them in rhythmical groups, or perhaps to imagine other silent beats coming between them, thus forming rhythmical groups of a different character. And the strokes of the clock, even when really all alike, we imagine to alternate between a "tick" and a "tock,"—that is, between a stronger and a lighter stress,—thus forming (again) rhythmical groups which satisfy the inner ear better than the mere repetition of identical stresses. In such ways as these we seek to

* On the meaning of the term "stress," see p. 165n below.

impose rhythmical order upon the disordered sounds of the world.

It is important to notice that two elements are equally necessary to the forming of rhythm: the equal time-intervals, and the stresses which mark them. A succession of sounds alternating between stress and no stress or between strong and weak stress, but not at regular intervals of time, does not impress the ear as rhythmical; and a succession of sounds occurring at equal time-intervals, but all of the same stress, does not seem rhythmical (unless, as in this latter case we have seen will probably be true, the ear imagines difference of stress where none really exists). Wherever rhythm is present, these two elements must occur.* It is true, however, that there is a difference in their conspicuousness. In the rhythm of dancing both time-intervals and stresses are strongly emphasized and universally felt. In the rhythm of music the time-intervals are more strongly felt than the presence of the stresses which mark them, and poor players and singers often neglect these stresses, because they are not expressly indicated in the printed musical text. In the rhythm of verse, on the other hand, the stresses are more strongly felt by many persons than the time-intervals which they mark, because these stresses are so

The two elements of rhythm.

* This has been proved experimentally in psychological laboratories. See an account by T. L. Bolton, in the *Amer. Journal of Psychology*, vol. vi, p. 145.

largely the stresses of ordinary speech; and poor readers often neglect the equal time-intervals, because there is nothing in the text of the verse expressly indicating them. This difference has resulted in the familiar careless statement that the rhythm of verse depends only on stress or accent. Sidney Lanier, a musician and poet who tried to show how the laws of musical rhythm apply to English verse, went clear to the other extreme, and declared that equal time-intervals are the only necessary element in rhythm.* Both statements are wrong, since, as we have seen, both elements are necessary. But it is quite true that music varies its regular stresses more freely than verse, and that verse varies its regular time-intervals more freely than music.

Musical and verse rhythm compared.

In the rhythm of music the problem of the composer, the player or the singer is comparatively simple. The sounds which are the materials of his art, no matter by what instrument they are produced, he may make as long or as short as he wishes, and may stress them to whatever extent he pleases, without any limitation except that of the form which he wishes to give them. Musical rhythm, therefore, is limited only by the capacity of the human ear to perceive and to enjoy rhythmical forms of sound. But with the rhythm of verse it is quite different. Verse is made up of sounds which are already fixed,

* *Science of English Verse*, p. 65.

to some extent, both as to their length and their stress, by the fact that they are used in familiar speech. The poet cannot use other sounds than those found in the words of ordinary intercourse, and he cannot alter them, or provide for any widely different pronunciation, merely because he wishes to arrange them in verse. From the rhythmical standpoint, therefore, the art of the poet is much more difficult and intricate than that of the musican; so also is the art of the reader of poetry, who—unlike the performer of music—has no clear guide to the rhythm of the verse in its printed text, but must read the words of which it is composed as *words and sentences,* yet at the same time read them *as rhythmical sound.*

This aspect of verse rhythm may be illustrated in this way. The rhythm of the artist may be conceived as a chain of innumerable equal links, which moves past him at a fixed rate of speed, yet whose speed is under his control so that he may either hurry or retard it. Into this chain of rhythmical units the musician, wishing to fit a series of sounds, may always put a sound, or a group of sounds, precisely of the right size and character to fit the several links, without hindrance or limitation of any kind. If a long sound is needed, he will take whatever sound he wishes and lengthen it to fit its link; if a stressed sound is needed, he will take what sound he pleases and stress it as the chain of rhythm may suggest. But the poet, wishing also to fit a

series of sounds to the steadily moving chain, has only a given number of sounds from which he may choose; and when he has chosen one of these sounds because it pleases him as a means of expressing his ideas or feelings, he finds that it already has a certain length and a certain stress which naturally belong to it, and that these may perhaps not at all fit the link for which it is needed. Within certain limits, as we shall presently see, he may indeed vary the natural sounds of speech, or may find them already variable, for his purpose; but these limits are clearly drawn and may not be disregarded. Like the musician, too, he may occasionally alter the speed at which the chain moves past, in order better to serve his purpose, but not so much as to seem to break the steadily onward movement of its rhythm.

Rhythm in human speech.

The question now arises whether human speech, with its time divisions and stresses already partly determined by quite other than rhythmical considerations, falls easily into rhythm, and in particular whether rhythm is found in prose as well as verse. Both these questions may be answered in the affirmative. It would be strange, seeing that the human ear is so fond of rhythm that it imagines it even where the necessary constituents are not present, if our speech did not often tend to be rhythmical without any attempt to organize it to that end. Such a simple and commonplace sentence as the one set down a moment ago, "Both these questions may be answered in

the affirmative," is at least approximately rhythmical, the stresses on the syllables *both, ques-, an-,* and *firm-,* ocurring at fairly equal time-intervals. Persons of sensitive ear will often find themselves altering the order of words in a sentence from that which they first hit upon in writing it, not because it does not adequately express their meaning in that form, but because on reading it aloud the cadence is not as rhythmical as they can make it by a slight change. And in literary prose, especially when it rises to express great dignity or strong emotion, rhythm is still more noticeable. Large parts of the Lord's Prayer (notably " Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven ") fall into a natural and beautifully perfect rhythm. Professor Lewis, in *The Principles of English Verse,* quotes this sentence from the Book of *Genesis* as one which he would read in rhythmical form, according to time-intervals indicated by the italicized stresses: " And *God saw* that the *wick*edness of *man* was *great* in the *earth,* and that *ev*ery imag*in*ation of the *thoughts* of his *heart* was *on*ly *e*vil con*tin*ually." Others would no doubt read the sentence differently, but still with an unconscious effort to make the time-intervals between the stresses approximately equal.

What, then, is the difference between the rhythm of prose and that of verse? and why is it, if prose is so often rhythmical, that it is considered a fault

if its rhythm reaches the point where it can be called not only rhythm but *metre?* The most obvious difference is that in prose no continuous chain or stream of rhythm is found persisting for any long period. It was necessary to say, in speaking of the Lord's Prayer, that *parts* of it are rhythmical; perhaps, indeed, all its parts may be regarded as rhythmical, but not according to any single rhythmical movement. We no sooner detect the rhythm in a prose passage, after beginning to analyze it, than it breaks off and new rhythmical cadences appear; and if the same rhythm goes on for too long a time, we feel that we are crossing the line into verse. Such an instance is this from Dickens:

Rhythm in prose and verse distinguished.

"When Death strikes down the innocent and young, for every fragile form from which he lets the panting spirit free, a hundred virtues rise, in shapes of mercy, charity, and love, to walk the world, and bless it. Of every tear that sorrowing mortals shed on such green graves, some good is born, some gentler nature comes."
(*Old Curiosity Shop,* chap. lxxii.)

A second characteristic of metre, as distinguished from rhythm, and implied in its name, is that its rhythm is not only formed by the usual brief equal time-intervals, but that these are grouped into larger equal units forming *verses.* In prose rhythm there are rhythmical groupings or periods, but they are not repeated in parallel types. In the passage

just quoted from Dickens, however, such groups as "in shapes of mercy, charity, and love," and "some good is born, some gentler nature comes," suggest a regularity appropriate to verse.

Yet once more, the rhythmical units of prose may be distinguished from those of verse in being found to consist of very irregular numbers of syllables. Thus in the passage quoted above from the book of *Genesis,* the number of syllables in the several time-intervals whose close is marked by the italicized stress runs something like this: two, one, three, four, two, three, three, five, four, three, two, two, three. Where there are four or five syllables, they are hurried over so as to be pronounced in a period of time approximately equal to that taken, in other cases, by one, two, or three. In this respect the rhythm of prose more closely resembles that of music than that of verse; for in music it is very common to find the number of separate sounds within the equal measures varying in number and length. The same thing *may* be true of verse, as we shall see a little later; so that it is erroneous to say, as some have done, that the one distinction between prose and verse rhythm is that the latter is measured into groups of a fixed number of syllables. Nevertheless it is true that in modern English verse the time-intervals are usually formed either by the regular alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, or by the alternation of one stressed and two unstressed syllables,—the number of syllables in the

rhythmical unit being therefore usually limited to two or three, and the number in the larger verse-unit to a multiple of two or three, varying commonly from six to eighteen or thereabouts. This gives the metre of verse a regularity of movement greater than that of the usual rhythms of music and prose.

Metre or verse, then, is formed of rhythmical groups of syllables, divided (as in all rhythm) by stresses into equal time-intervals, and also divided into regular larger groups which, persistently repeated, carry on a fixed rhythm throughout the composition which they form. In prose, rhythm may be said to be snatched up, from time to time, as an accessory adornment of speech; in verse, rhythm absorbs all speech, bears it up and carries it on in a continuous movement to a perfectly ordered end.*

The relation of speech stresses to verse rhythm.

It is now time to inquire more in detail how the sounds of ordinary English speech are fitted, either naturally or artificially, to the regular stresses and time-intervals of verse rhythm. And first as to stresses or ac-

* In a paper on "The Scansion of Prose Rhythm," in the *Publications* of the Modern Language Association, vol. xx, p. 707, Professor F. N. Scott distinguishes the "rhythm" of prose from that of verse as being based on changes of pitch rather than of stress. Interesting as his discussion is, the phenomena with which it is concerned are of so completely different a character from those under consideration here, that one doubts the propriety of using the same word, rhythm, to describe them.

cents.* These are conspicuous elements in the natural sounds of the language, and are formed primarily simply by the louder utterance of certain syllables (though they may be characterized incidentally by other changes, such as difference of pitch). In general a syllable is stressed for one of two reasons: because it is the root-syllable of a word, or because it occupies an important place in a sentence. These two reasons will very commonly work together, syllables being stressed for both reasons at once, or left unstressed because neither applies. But they may conflict. Thus a root-syllable may be very slightly stressed if the word in which it stands is of little grammatical or rhetorical importance; as, for example, the first syllable of *over,* in the sentence "He jumped over the fence," compared with the sentence, "I said

* In this book the terms "accent" and "stress" are used as synonymous, and as having primary reference to the force or loudness of the sound in question. Either term may be used more generally; as, for example, by Mr. Omond, when he remarks that "anything which gives importance to a syllable may be said to lay stress on it." And again: "'Accent' with us does not necessarily imply either elevation of pitch, or increase of loudness, or prolongation of time. Normally we like to unite all three on one syllable, and this is probably our commonest type of accent. But . . . any device which thus distinguishes a syllable from its fellows makes it conspicuous, and this conspicuousness is what we really mean by 'accent.'" (*English Metrists*, pp. 5, 4.) In theory, this is true; actually, however, for the modern Germanic languages, English included, an accented syllable is one uttered with more force or loudness than its neighbors (in French the same statement will not certainly hold). With this force there *may* be associated a change of pitch or a change of duration, but neither necessarily.

over, not under." On the other hand, a syllable bearing no etymological accent (that is, accent due to its being the root syllable) will very rarely be stressed for rhetorical reasons; and while we can easily pronounce "over" in a sentence with little or no stress on the first syllable, we cannot pronounce the second syllable with any stress at all. Monosyllables are commonly stressed or left unstressed according to the second principle alone—their grammatical or rhetorical importance. Many words, especially compounds in which each member is strictly entitled to an etymological accent (like *new-found*), may divide the stress almost equally between two syllables, or shift it to either according to the preference of the speaker. The numerals in "-teen" are of this class, being usually stressed on the last syllable at the end of a clause, otherwise on the first.

Degrees of syllabic accent.

Thus far it has been implied that there are but two kinds of syllables, considered with reference to accent: stressed and unstressed. But this is of course not the case. Theoretically there may be an almost infinite number of degrees of stress, as the intensity of utterance is increased or diminished. Practically we think of syllables as falling into three classes: (1) those not stressed, or stressed so slightly by comparison with their neighbors as to seem unstressed; (2) those fully stressed; and (3) those half stressed or bearing what is commonly called

a secondary accent. Thus in many words of three syllables, and in nearly all of four syllables and more, two are stressed—one fully, the other secondarily. Examples are the third syllable of *circumstance,* the third of *ordinary,* the second of *imagination,* the fifth (perhaps also the first) of *unpremeditated,* the second of *intelligibility.* These secondary stresses exist on a principle akin to the etymological,—the hereditary tendencies of the language or the history of the particular word. But in the case of compound words and of monosyllables a secondary stress may be due to the second principle,—the grammatical or rhetorical importance of the syllable in question.

When we come to fit these syllables to a metrical scheme, whose rhythm requires stresses at equal intervals, it is evident that certain groups of words (as we have seen is the case even in prose) will conform readily to the metrical scheme, dividing themselves naturally into stressed and non-stressed syllables, whether for etymological, grammatical or rhetorical reasons. Thus in the verse

Alterations of stress to fit the metrical scheme.

"The certain secret thing he had to tell"

there is a regular alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, which would occur in the case of the same sentence in prose, and which naturally conforms to the particular kind of metre here rep-

resented. The accents on the first syllables of *certain* and *secret* are due to etymology and could not be wholly dispensed with; *thing, had,* and *tell,* being monosyllables, could theoretically be stressed or unstressed, but *thing* is an important noun in the sentence, and *tell* an important verb, so that both are entitled to grammatical or rhetorical stress. *Had* is the only word in the sentence which is stressed a little differently in the metre from what it would be in prose; one feels that in prose its stress—because of its slighter importance—would be lighter than that on *thing* or *tell;* yet it would certainly be heavier than that on either of its neighbors, *he* and *to,* which are wholly unstressed, and it therefore easily assumes the metrical stress desired for its position in the sentence. But it is not often that a phrase will be found so naturally adapted to the stresses of verse rhythm. Thus in the line

"Nor ever did he speak nor looked at me"

it is evident that the rhythm asks for more stress on *did* that it would have in prose speech; and this is readily granted, for it is a word which can easily take a stress, and—even in prose—is stressed rather more than the last syllable of *ever,* which precedes it, or the *he* which follows it. In the line

"He swept the spring that watered my heart's drouth"

the syllable *my* also needs a stronger stress for the rhythm than it would have in the prose sentence; and this cannot easily be granted it, since to accent the *my* strongly would give a false emphasis and a false meaning. One can see, however, that even this *my* may be stressed a little more than the preceding last syllable of *watered*, and perhaps a little more in verse than it would be in prose.* Once more, let us consider the line—

"Only our mirrored eyes met silently."

Here it is the last syllable which seems to require a strong stress for the completion of the rhythm, but which in prose utterance would bear little or none. Yet the line is neither unusual nor disagreeable. In reading it we do not, indeed, as in the other cases, give the light syllable a stronger stress than in prose, but rather may be said to *think* a stress for it; and so generally for the final syllable of the line,† when it is capable of bearing the slightest secondary stress. The final syllable of "silently" is such a syllable, since it is not so completely unstressed (even in prose) as the one preceding; for the *second* syllable of *silent* or *silently* it would be very difficult to imagine a stress, no matter how much the rhythm might require it.

* It may be noticed again that the want of stress in "-tered" and "my" is compensated for by the repeated stress on the following syllables, "heart's drouth."

† Compare the privilege, in classical prosody, by which even a naturally short syllable is regarded as long at the end of the verse.

All these cases have been those in which, for purposes of verse rhythm, a syllable has been stressed more strongly than it would have been stressed in prose, yet without going beyond certain limits of natural word accent. We may also find cases where the syllable may be stressed *less* strongly for the same purpose. In the line

"Then the dark ripples spread to waving hair"

the adjective *dark* would bear, in prose utterance, about the same rhetorical stress as the first syllable of *ripples*. In verse, however, since it occupies the place of a light syllable in the rhythmical scheme, its stress may be lightened sufficiently to bring a stronger stress on the syllable that follows. It would be easy to find even more obvious illustrations of the same principle.

Hovering accents.

We may also find many instances where these two processes, of increasing or diminishing the natural prose stresses of syllables, take place successively in the case of adjacent syllables, thus forming a compromised pair of stresses—each one representing something yielded by natural utterance for the sake of rhythm, yet without destroying the normal total of stress. The verse

"And as I stooped, her own lips rising there"

shows such a pair of syllables in *own lips*. In prose, *lips* would be stressed more strongly than *own;* the verse rhythm expects that the reverse will be the case. The result is, since *own* is quite capable of taking a stress without injuring the sense, that the total stress is easily divided by the reader between *own* and *lips*. The same compromise may be made with the syllables *that sound* in the line

"In the low wave; and that sound came to be." *

Such compromised accents are often called *hovering,* and are particularly common in the case of compound words, where the stress easily shifts to either member or is divided between both; as in a line of one of Shakspere's songs:

"That o'er the green *corn-field* did pass."

Let us now try to summarize, in the form of a few definite principles, what we have seen to be the relations of normal speech accent to the stresses of verse rhythm.

Summary of laws of verse accents.

1. In general, the syllable bearing the principal stress in an English word can be used only in the stressed place in the verse; or, if used in another place, it triumphs over the verse rhythm, and the latter is altered. In like manner, a wholly un-

* These seven examples are all from the first of Rossetti's *Willow-wood* sonnets,—a notable study in the delicate variation of rhythmical stresses.

stressed syllable will be used only in an unstressed place in the verse.*

2. But a syllable bearing the secondary accent may be treated as either stressed or unstressed, for metrical purposes; so also may a monosyllable, provided its grammatical or rhetorical stress be not violated.

3. Where the metrical stress conflicts, not with the normal word accent, but only with the grammatical or rhetorical, the difference may be compromised, and the stress be divided (or made to "hover") between the two.

4. In general, stress is relative rather than positive; so that a syllable at one time bearing a full stress may at another bear only a secondary stress. In particular, if a syllable naturally takes a lighter stress than the one immediately adjacent to it, it may be regarded as unstressed for metrical purposes, even if stressed in its own word; † and conversely, if it naturally takes a heavier stress than the adjacent syllable, it may be regarded as metri-

* The only exception to this rule is where an unstressed syllable is used in such a way—for example, is made to bear the rime—as to indicate that the poet wishes it to be stressed in violation of word accent; in this case the accent is called *wrenched*. Examples are such conventional ballad terminations as *countree* (the second syllable bearing the riming stress), and an occasional bold license like that of Swinburne in *The Leper*, where "well-water" rimes with "her," or of Rossetti in *Willowwood*, where "wing-feathers" rimes with "hers."

† In illustration, compare the first syllable of "over" in such a verse as "Far over seas, and beyond all the mountains" with the same syllable in such a verse as "Over the ocean wave."

cally stressed (especially in the last place in the verse) even if unstressed in its own word.

The views here presented as to the variation of speech stresses in shifting conformity to, or in conflict with, the metrical scheme, may be regarded as holding the middle ground between two extreme positions, according to which word stress on the one hand, or metrical stress on the other, is to be preserved at any cost. Critics who represent, on the whole, the effort to base verse structure on the ordinary arrangements of speech stresses, include no less distinguished a scholar than Professor Skeat, who wishes to analyze verse by "the natural method of grouping the syllables around the accented syllables with which, in actual pronunciation, they are associated," and Mr. Mark Liddell, who in a somewhat similar manner represents metrical rhythm as resting fundamentally on the rhetorical stresses of poetical sentences. (See further, on both these critics and Mr. Robert Bridges, in chap. v below.) At the other extreme are the views of Professor J. W. Bright, who wishes to preserve the regular metrical stress of English words, even where it conflicts boldly with their ordinary stress values, and in order to do so constructs a theory of a kind of "pitch-accent," a variety of the secondary stress. This secondary stress, in which the element of pitch is more conspicuous than that of pure stress or of quantity, he believes is normally imposed upon all syllables which occupy the position in which metrical accent is expected, when they bear no natural word accent of themselves. Thus in the verse

"To be or not to be: that is the question"

he places this pitch-accent or metrical ictus on "is," although admitting the principal rhetorical accent on "that." (See his paper on "Proper Names in Old English Verse," in the *Publications* of the Modern Language Association, vol. xiv, p. 347, and that on "Grammatical Ictus in English Verse," in the *Furnivall Miscellany* of 1901.) Most persons find this "pitch-accent" a difficult matter to understand, and the theory seems to have found acceptance only with certain pupils and associates of Professor Bright. Certain of these have developed it more in detail; for example Dr. Geo. D. Brown, in a monograph called *Syllabification and Accent in the Paradise Lost,* Dr. Raymond D. Miller, in *Secondary Accent in Modern English Verse,* and Dr. W. F. Melton, in *The Rhetoric of John Donne's Verse.* As Mr. Omond observes of such of these papers as he has seen, "their central position is always assumed, never established by argument." It probably amounts to a subjective experiment in the way of interpreting the conflict of rhetorical and rhythmical accents; and the examples of such conflict (which by most critics would be called instances either of *inverted* or *hovering* accent), accumulated in these studies, are valuable for all students of metre. The poetry of Donne, studied in detail by Dr. Melton, has long been recognized as giving the most remarkable group of such conflicting arrangements of stress to be found in English poetry. Dr. Melton has accumulated no little evidence looking toward the conclusion that the peculiarities of Donne's verse are deliberate devices of his art, and by no means due to indifference to form or to an untrained ear. But most readers will probably find more satisfaction in the interpretation offered by Professor H. M. Belden, in an unpublished paper on "Donne's Pros-

ody" from which Dr. Melton quotes (p. 56), than in his own application of the "secondary accent" theory. Professor Belden says in part: "The verse-rhythm of Donne's poetry is the natural and outward form of his mental temper. . . . In Donne the meaning, straining against the rhythm of the fore-established metre in the reader's mind, reproduces there the slow, tense emphasis of Donne's thought. The melodists, from Greene and Marlowe to Swinburne, are always in danger (if it is a danger) of lulling the mind to sleep with the music of the verse. The verse pattern is caught at once. . . . Donne's verse is never lyric in this sense. Instead he leaves you, line after line and phrase after phrase, in doubt of the pattern, or of how the line is to be fitted to the pattern, producing thereby a searching pause on almost every syllable,— a sort of perpetual 'hovering accent.'"

Speech quantities and verse rhythm.

We now come to the matter of the relation of the sounds of English speech to verse-rhythm so far as concerns their *quantity* or *length*. Here we shall find the conditions very similar to those already considered with respect to accent, but with this difference: that the quantities of English syllables are even less fixed, and consequently more flexible, than their stresses. In the early periods of the language syllables were evidently distinguishable quite generally as long or short, just as they are distinguished as long and short in the Latin and Greek languages. But in modern English very few syllables are obviously long or obviously short, to a degree which is felt by every one, or which amounts to a require-

ment of pronunciation at all comparable to the requirement that certain syllables shall be stressed. Certain vowels are commonly called "long," like the *a* in *pane,* the *o* in *cone,* the *e* in *beet*; but these vowels are really prolonged but slightly, and there is no difficulty in pronouncing *pane* in substantially the same time as *pan, cone* in the same time as *con,* and *beet* in the same time as *bet.* We do not hear such obviously prolonged vowels as may still be heard in the German language, in words like *Saal* and *See.* Certain diphthongs, especially that found in *town* and that in *coin,* may be said to be perceptibly longer than most other vowel sounds; yet even in these cases what we mean is rather that they tend to be long, or that they may easily be prolonged, rather than that they *must* be. The length of vowel sounds may make a good deal of difference in the melody of our verse, but it is rarely of a sufficiently definite character to make much difference in its rhythm.

Syllables are said to be long, however, not merely because of long vowels but because of the presence of consonant sounds in addition to the vowels. It is a familiar principle of Latin quantity that two consonants following a vowel (with few exceptions) make long the syllable in which it stands; and theoretically this rule may be said to hold good for English also. When two consonants follow a vowel (unless they be such as coalesce into a single sound, like *bl* and the like), the first of them is attached

to the vowel to form the syllable in which it stands, while the other is usually attached to the following vowel to form the next syllable. The consonant thus "closes" the syllable behind it, and requires that it be uttered more completely,—in other words, that it be prolonged. Thus the first syllable of *plenty* is perceptibly longer than that of *penny,* simply because the *t* after the *n* closes up the first syllable, making it necessary to pronounce the *n* as a part of that syllable; in the other word the *n* (which is but a single sound, though written in doubled form) goes over and belongs, in syllable pronunciation, with the *y*. Consonant quantities of this sort, however, like the quantities of vowel sounds, while they play a large part in the smoothness and melody of our verse, are but slightly significant for its rhythm. The disposition of our speech is to hurry over unstressed syllables with rapidity, and this may be done and is done even when the syllables are theoretically long because of the presence of several consonants. When these consonants become so numerous as to make it difficult to pronounce them rapidly, as is the case in a word like *strange* (a syllable long in every possible way), then they perceptibly fill up the time of a rhythmical period; and this length is eagerly availed of—as we shall see—to make a single syllable, on occasion, fill the time of two. Yet on the other hand, when the poet wishes us to hurry over them

in the smallest rhythmical period, as Swinburne does, for example, in the line

"Time sheds them like snows on *strange* regions,"

we follow his bidding, though perhaps with some complaint at the work which the tongue has to do to keep up with the pace of the rhythm.

Relation of quantity and accent.

The statement made a moment ago, that it is characteristic of our speech to hurry over unstressed syllables rapidly, suggests the converse, that it is also our tendency to linger on syllables strongly stressed. If this is true, it appears that there is an intimate connection between stress and quantity in English speech; and this fact has led some writers to go so far as to say that for English usage quantity and accent are the same thing.* This is certainly erroneous. Even if every accented syllable were long and every unaccented syllable short, quantity and accent would still be different elements of sound, produced in different ways. And it is quite possible to find stressed syllables which are uttered quickly, and unstressed syllables which may be prolonged. It is nevertheless true that in both our prose and our verse length and stress, shortness and lightness, tend to go together. One may see at least two reasons why this is so: (1) a stress is more pleasing to the ear when it rests on a sound that can

* For example, Poe, in his essay on "The Rationale of Verse."

be prolonged, such as *toll,* than when it rests on a very short syllable like *bit;* and (2) the stressed syllables, being the important ones (whether from etymological, grammatical, or rhetorical reasons), are likely to be prolonged because of this very importance, while those unimportant for any of these reasons are likely to be neglected both in respect of stress and time. If we wish to make an expression emphatic, such as "You don't mean to tell me that that is John Jones!" we shall find that we not only stress both *John* and *Jones,* but that we tend to lengthen both those syllables. If we simply say "John Jones's brother was here this morning," *John* and *Jones* will be both lighter and shorter syllables than in the former instance. This shows us how natural it is, from the simple standpoint of rhetorical emphasis, that quantity and stress should keep together.

Verse rhythm, being peculiarly sensitive to both stress and quantity, is even more likely than prose speech to keep these two elements together. Mr. Omond, in *A Study of Metre,* brings together these lines, "taken almost at random from Tennyson's blank verse," as illustrations of the usage of poets * in choosing naturally long syllables to bear the metrical stresses:

The weight of all the hopes of half the world.
The voice of days of old and days to be.

* Not all poets, certainly, do it to an equal degree. For some, the element of quantity is but faintly recognized.

Where all of high and holy dies away.
Again for glory, while the golden lyre.
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ.
The craft of kindred, and the godless hosts
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern Sea.
Then came thy shameful sin with Lancelot.
I guard as God's high gift from scathe and wrong.
As in the golden days before thy sin.

If we wish illustrations of the converse tendency, —the tendency to choose short syllables where there is no metrical stress expected,—we shall find them most obvious in trisyllabic metres, where more rapid utterance constantly makes two short syllables fill the time which a single long one might occupy. Such are these lines from Swinburne's *In the Water:*

"The sea is awake, and the sound of the song of the joy of her waking is rolled
From afar to the star that recedes, from anear to the wastes of the wild wide shore.
Her call is a trumpet compelling us homeward: if dawn in her east be acold,
From the sea shall we crave not her grace to rekindle the life that it kindled before,
Her breath to requicken, her bosom to rock us, her kisses to bless as of yore?"

Yet, remembering these natural tendencies of syllables toward long or short times of utterance, we must have even more clearly in mind the fact that their quantity is a flexible thing, which can be

adapted to the requirements of the time-intervals of rhythm. A syllable naturally long may be made to fill the place of two short syllables, so as to keep the unit of rhythm of the same length; and a syllable not naturally long may be so prolonged as to serve the same purpose, unless its sound be so conspicuously short as to make it unfit for such prolongation. In the passage just quoted from Swinburne we find the syllable *wide* filling the place of two short syllables, in line two; and a little further on in the same poem the syllables *yearns* and *flecked* serve the same purpose. In these last two cases the syllables are evidently well fitted by natural length for such a substitution; *wide* is not so essentially long, but is easily made so, while in other places it might be fairly short. In this verse,—

Quantity altered to fit the metrical scheme.

"Is less than the rapture of spirit whereby, though
the burden it quits were sore,"

it appears that the syllable *were* must be made to fill the place of two short syllables; and this it is not fitted to do, either by natural length or rhetorical importance. It will be found that in reading the line the duty is shifted back upon the word *quits,* which not only fills the time of the long syllable in its own place, but that of a missing short syllable in the following time-unit. The same thing is true of the syllable *-dures* in this line:

"In the life that endures no burden, and bows not
the forehead, and bends not the knee."

Other types of flexibility in the length of English syllables are admirably illustrated by Coleridge's *Christabel,* a poem in which a constant variation in the number of syllables is not permitted to interfere with the general equality of the time-intervals between stresses. For example:

"There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek—
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky."

And again:

"A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate,
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out."

Here the chief task of the reader is to shorten unstressed syllables in order to hurry on to the next stress. In some cases the task is easy, because of the natural shortness or unimportance of the syllables; in others it is not so easy,—notably in the case of the syllable *marched,* in the last line quoted, which is naturally very long, but is here to be shortened in the deliberate effort to keep the time-intervals of the rhythm equal. The long syllable *ironed,* however, is given abundant time for utterance, occupy-

ing not only its natural time but that of a missing short syllable in the place immediately following. On the other hand, it will be noticed that both syllables of the words *little* and *middle* are naturally so short that there is difficulty in finding sufficient quantity of sound to fill up the time-intervals in which they stand.

When quantity is deficient because syllables as pronounced do not fill up the time-intervals, there is a method of compensation which we have not yet noticed. It may be illustrated by this line of Pope's:

Pauses used to complete time-intervals.

"Not for the doctrine, but the music there."

Here the syllable *-trine* is both unstressed and very short, and the following *but,* though it is capable of bearing a stress and of being prolonged, cannot here be made stronger without injuring the rhetorical emphasis. The comma, however, indicates a pause, and every reader would make a pause sufficient to compensate for the lack of quantity in the syllables.* Similar instances may be found on almost every page of poetry. In the first line of *Paradise Lost,* for example,—

"Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit,"—

* Of course it must not be understood that all rhetorical pauses, indicated by commas, are compensatory and count in the rhythmical time. Many such pauses have to *steal* their time from the rhythmical intervals,—like ordinary phrase-pauses in music.

not only can the word *and* be slightly lengthened (that is, pronounced more deliberately and distinctly) from its usual prose utterance, but the pause indicated by the comma helps to compensate for its slight quantity. In like manner, again, the line

"Come from the dying moon, and blow"

requires us to lengthen the syllable *dy-* far beyond its normal prose length, and even suggests a slight rhythmical pause before *moon;* while the lengthening of *moon,* a still easier change of quantity, is assisted by the following pause indicated by the comma. Thus everywhere the two methods of compensation—lengthening and pausing—help to fill the theoretically equal time-intervals. It is of course observable that the ordinary reader does not make use of these compensations with sufficient exactness to preserve the perfect equality of the rhythmical intervals; in this respect, as we have seen, the rhythm of verse is more flexible and irregular than that of music, because of its constant conflict with the normal utterance of the words which are brought into its scheme; but the tendency is always to make these words fit the rhythmical scheme by such changes as we have been noticing.

Pauses compensating for missing syllables.

The possibility of filling a rhythmical interval by a *pause* is even more clearly shown in instances where the pause takes the place of a wholly missing syllable,

—not merely compensates for the shortness of a syllable. This pause, analogous to a musical rest equal to one of the beats of the musical time, is not at all unusual in our verse, although it is often neglected. Striking examples are found in such doggerel rimes as—

> "Polly, put the kettle on,
> We'll all ∧ take ∧ tea;"

in such songs as—

> "Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
> And auld ∧ lang ∧ syne?"

and in such expressive lyrical rhythms as—

> "Break, ∧ break, ∧ break,
> On thy cold gray stones, O sea!"

Sometimes they are regularly used to give a peculiar character to a rhythm, as in Kipling's *Last Chantey,* in which the first verse of each stanza omits two unstressed syllables:

> "Loud ∧ sang the souls ∧ of the jolly, jolly mariners." *

In dramatic poetry such pauses may serve the purpose of indicating a natural pause in the speaker's utterance, either marking the transition from one passage to another, or giving space for a moment of

* In this instance the time of the missing syllable may be partly filled by lengthening the preceding syllable, as is easily done with "loud" and "souls:" the same thing is observable in the three examples quoted above. A considerable pause, however, is clearly necessary.

silent action. In Shakspere's verse, for such purposes as these, even a stressed syllable seems sometimes to be omitted; as in the lines

"Kneel thou down, Philip. ∧ But rise more great"
(*King John*, I, i, 161)

and

"Than the soft myrtle. ∧ But man, proud man."
(*Measure for Measure*, II, ii, 117.)

Such instances support the saying of Mr. Omond, that "a dropped accent, like a dropped syllable, may minister to our perception of periodic recurrence." And all these pauses emphasize the similar remark of Sidney Lanier that rhythm "may be dependent on silences" as well as on sounds. In discussing accent we saw that the reader of verse may sometimes *think* a stress even where the syllable must be left unstressed in utterance; still more remarkable is the power of the inner ear to enjoy rhythms dependent on silent time-intervals between sounds.

Summary of laws of verse quantities.

Let us now try to summarize, as was done in the matter of stress, the principles governing the relations of the element of quantity in ordinary speech to the time-intervals of verse rhythm.

1. Most English syllables are long or short only relatively, and may be either prolonged or shortened to fit rhythmical intervals, subject in some degree to their rhetorical importance.

2. Syllables, however, which are most easily prolonged are preferred at those places in the verse where the rhythmical stress is expected; and syllables most naturally short are preferred (particularly in trisyllabic metres) for the unstressed places.

3. When the natural quantity of the syllables is insufficient to fill the normal time-interval, the deficiency is often supplied not only by lengthening an adjacent syllable, but by introducing a compensating pause.

4. Pauses may also fill the place of wholly missing syllables, in order to complete the approximate equality of the time-intervals between stresses.

Such are some of the ways in which both the writer and the reader of English verse meet the wonderfully intricate problem of the adjustment of our natural speech to the laws of rhythm. Sufficient must have been said, at any rate, to show the delicacy and the complexity of both arts—that of reading and that of writing verse in our language. On the one hand lie the infinite variations of stress- and time-values which usage has developed for the purpose of communicating thought and feeling through language; on the other the great principles of rhythm which are no less truly natural, and which we know most clearly through music. The result is in a sense a compromise,—let us rather say a combination of forms, which gives pleasure at the same time by the fidelity with which the language of poetry fits itself

Adjustment of speech to rhythm.

to rhythm and the persistency with which it varies from rhythm.* It was said of Chopin that in playing his waltzes his left hand kept absolutely perfect time, while his right hand constantly varied the rhythm of the melody, according to what musicians call *tempo rubato,* "stolen" or distorted time. Whether this is true in fact, or even physically possible, has been doubted; but it represents a perfectly familiar possibility of the mind. Two streams of sound pass constantly through the inner ear of one who understands or appreciates the rhythm of our verse: one, never actually found in the real sounds which are uttered, is the absolute rhythm, its equal time-intervals moving on in infinitely perfect progression; the other, represented by the actual movement of the verse, is constantly shifting by quickening, retarding, strengthening or weakening its sounds, yet always hovers along the line of the perfect rhythm, and bids the ear refer to that perfect rhythm the succession of its pulsations.

The extent to which quantity or time-values may be considered essential to the nature of English rhythms, and the relation of this element to that of stress, are the most warmly disputed, and doubtless the most truly difficult, matters which the student of our verse has to consider. They have been discussed by Sidney

* Guyau interestingly compares the artifice by which syllables are given special values to fit them to the metrical scheme, with the "tempered scale" of the modern pianoforte, to form which a similar artifice was devised for the *pitch* of the several notes. (*Problèmes de l'Esthétique Contemporaine,* p. 185.)

Lanier, in *The Science of English Verse;* by Poe in his essay on "The Rationale of Verse;" by T. D. Goodell, in an article on "Quantity in English Verse," in the *Proceedings* of the American Philological Society for 1885; by William Larminie, in an article on "The Development of English Metres" in the *Contemporary Review* for November, 1894; by John M. Robertson, in the Appendix to *New Essays towards a Critical Method;* by Mark H. Liddell, in *An Introduction to the Scientific Study of Poetry;* by T. S. Omond, in *A Study of Metre;* by Wm. Thomson, in *The Basis of English Rhythm;* and by most of those who have taken part in the controversy regarding English imitations of the classical hexameter (see references in chap. v). Two extremes may be noted at once in these discussions: the position of those who would analyze English verse primarily into exactly equal time-intervals, and assign exact time-values to the separate syllables, as to the separate notes in musical rhythm, treating stress—as in music—as an incidental means of marking the time-intervals; and the position of those who make our rhythms to depend wholly on arrangements of variously stressed syllables, regarding it as a mistaken and useless effort to seek for regular time-intervals or feet, much less for regular syllabic quantities. Of the first extreme the best representatives to which students of the subject may be referred are the discussions of Sidney Lanier and Mr. William Thomson; of the other extreme the discussion of Mr. Liddell. For the one, metre has fundamentally the nature of music, so far as its rhythmical elements are concerned; for the other it is simply one form of rhetoric,—the arrangement of words by a peculiarly regular and expressive system of stresses. Equally conflicting are the various opinions of these writers on the

question as to whether, in English, a stressed syllable and a long syllable mean substantially the same thing. It is impossible to represent by brief extracts the arguments on these matters; for some detailed comment on them, the student may be referred to *English Verse,* Part III. In general, the tendency of recent prosodical literature has been to avoid either extreme, and to recognize—somewhat after the fashion set forth in the present chapter—the existence and the importance of both the elements of time and accent, sometimes conflicting, sometimes agreeing, according as our natural speech utterance fits more or less readily the theoretical measures of the rhythmical scheme. But it cannot be said that anything like an agreement has yet been reached on the question whether it is possible to analyze and describe the length of syllables and feet with accuracy. Mr. Saintsbury, the latest writer on English verse, gives it as his personal opinion that "in English accent is a *cause of* quantity, but not the only cause, and not a stable one;" but he avoids the real issue as to the relation of this matter to the analysis of metres, using the terms "long" and "short" with explicit ambiguity. "I call the two classes 'longs' and 'shorts' without the very slightest innuendo or insinuation that I believe the source of difference to be the greater length of time, the greater quantity, in the technical sense, of the one as compared with the other. . . . I call these two values 'long' and 'short' just as I might call them 'Abracadabra' and 'Abraxas'—absolutely without prejudice or preference to any theory of the exact process by which the one becomes Abraxas or the other Abracadabra." (*Hist. of Eng. Prosody,* vol. i, p. 5.)

One of the most suggestive, and really practical, aspects of the discussion is that which concerns the possi-

bility of representing English metres by musical notation. This involves two subordinate questions: whether our metres are properly divisible into equal intervals, and whether the separate syllables are exactly related to each other in proportions of length such as musical notes are fitted to represent. If the views set forth in the earlier pages of this chapter are sound, we should probably answer the first question in the affirmative, but the second in the negative. The best way for the individual student to solve it for himself is to consider carefully the examples given by Lanier and Thomson of verse described by musical notation. (Those of Thomson are almost certainly the best that have been undertaken; still others may be found in Dabney's *Musical Basis of English Verse.*) From the standpoint of the present writer, it is a significant fact that these defenders of the musical system differ radically among themselves on one of the most fundamental questions to which the system immediately gives rise: how shall we represent, musically, a normal verse of our common iambic five-stress measure? Lanier and Thomson answer, in three-eight time, giving to each stressed syliable a time-value approximately twice as long as that of the alternate syllables. Dabney answers, in two-eight (or two-four) time; and Omond (although not using the musical notation) tends to support this view, treating our common iambic measures as in common or "duple" time. The same question, put to a large number of fairly intelligent students of English poetry, has usually met with responses as different as these of the critics. Why is it that, in the presence of perfectly familiar musical times and perfectly familiar poetical metres, we cannot say which of the one is most like any of the others, when it comes to accurate denotation? The best answer is that the

values of the alternating syllables of our common verse correspond neither to double nor triple time; no ordinary reader reads the stressed syllable with twice the length of the unstressed, nor with the same length. It is very likely that a measure made up of an eighth note plus a dotted eighth (equal to one and one-half the time-value of the eighth) would fairly represent the normal syllabic pairs of some metres; in others an eighth note plus a double-dotted eighth (equal to one and three-quarters the time value of the eighth) would do better. No such measure, of course, is known to music. And if this is true of the perfectly regular and typical metre, how much more complicated the problem of representing the constant and delicate alterations of syllabic time which we have seen are made by the reader in adjusting normal speech utterance to the rhythm imposed upon it! It is one thing to agree that the time-intervals, the units of rhythm, in a normal verse tend as regularly to equality of length as the measures of music; but quite another thing to say that the separate syllables within those intervals have the familiar mathematical relations of length which we use in the rhythms of music. No; when a poem is set to music, its syllables take on new and artificial time relations, other than that which they have even in the most regular metrical reading.

Mr. Omond, although—as we have seen—he finds it convenient to distinguish our metres as of duple and triple time, supports these conclusions in this characteristically reasonable summary: "It will also be evident how futile it is to expect correspondence between the methods of metre and music. Musical notes are almost pure symbols. In theory at least, and no doubt substantially in practice, they can be divided with

mathematical accuracy—into fractions of 1-2, 1-4, 1-8, 1-16, etc.—and the ideal of music is absolute accordance with time. Verse has other methods and another ideal. Its words are concrete things, not readily carved to such exact pattern. . . . The perfection of music lies in absolute accordance with time, that of verse in continual slight departures from time. This is why no musical representations of verse ever seem satisfactory. They assume regularity where none exists. . . . On the other hand, to suppose that this imperfection is itself rhythmical—that these aberrations from type, variations of stress and quantity and what not, constitute in themselves the law of verse—would be a still more fatal blunder." (*A Study of Metre,* p. 59.)

We have next to consider the connection between this rhythmical character of poetry and its inner imaginative character as previously studied, asking ourselves why metre has proved to be an essential element in poetry, and what function it performs in the total purpose of the art. Many answers to these questions have been proposed by various critics, but it will be found that most of them may be considered under three heads: the relation of metre to poetry (1) as a pleasure-giving work of art, (2) as the expression of emotion, and (3) as a means of idealizing experiences through the imagination.

Rhythm and the inner nature of poetry.

In the first place, then, all arts seek the expression of beauty, poetry no less than the rest, and rhythm impresses the ear with an effect akin to that of beauty to the eye. The explanation of this impression is often

Rhythm as a means of beauty.

sought in the principle of "Variety in Uniformity" (which only carries the matter a step further by giving it a name), according to which we enjoy that which seems perpetually approximating to regularity or likeness, yet is forever altering its forms. (Wordsworth speaks of the same principle in the phrase "the perception of similitude in dissimilitude.") How characteristic this quality is of the rhythms of our verse, the greater part of this chapter has certainly tended to show. But further than this, the metrical form of poetry, with its approximation to accurate rhythm, gives a sense of perfection, of completeness, and of permanence, which in the same way arouses the pleasure characteristically produced by works of art. Some will have it that the very appreciation of difficulties overcome, arising from our knowledge that to fit the words of common speech to rhythmical form is no light undertaking, is an element in this pleasure. Whether that be so or not, the resulting perfection is certainly perceived and enjoyed by an almost universal human sense. Leigh Hunt, in an effort to express this effect of perfect form produced by metre, spoke of it as "that finishing, and rounding, and 'tuneful planeting' of the poet's creations which is produced of necessity by the smooth tendencies of their energy or inward working, and the harmonious dance into which they are attracted round the orb of the beautiful;"—an allusion to the "nebular hypothesis," according to which the forms of the

planets in the solar system were supposed to have been due to the action of the law of gravitation upon their parts and their movements. In the same way, Hunt implies, the form of poetry is not to be thought of as a merely arbitrary thing imposed upon speech, but as that aspect which speech presents when its aspiration toward beauty has worked out its lawful and perfect ends. Emerson makes use of a similar analogy when he says, "the poet . . . brings you heaps of rainbow bubbles, opaline, air-borne, spherical as the world, instead of a few drops of soap and water." The sphere is a symbol of perfection to the eye; rhythm a symbol of perfection to the ear.

In the second place, the language of poetry seeks metrical form because it is in an especial sense the expression of emotion. To explain this is hardly possible except by restating in different forms the fact that human emotion seeks rhythmical utterance, always and everywhere. Children, barbarians, and madmen—those who abandon themselves to emotional expression with the least interference by the reason—break into rocking movements of the body, if not into dancing, and into rhythmical utterances of voice, with instant and spontaneous response to any emotional stimulus. As civilization advances, and men become more and more suspicious of unrestrained emotion, they teach their bodies and their voices to modify and curtail these expressions;

Rhythm as expressive of emotion.

dancing becomes a merely conventional amusement, song emphasizes melody and harmony rather than pure rhythm, and verse comes to be read rhetorically rather than metrically. Yet happily the natural instinct remains, which not

> "all that is at enmity with joy
> Can utterly abolish or destroy."

For, although we use prose increasingly to express ideas which have emotional associations, yet when emotion takes the reins from the hands of reason, and breaks forth unrestrained, the pace becomes rhythmical and, if natural expression is really attained, regular metre follows.* Or, to reverse the order, the pulsations of rhythm, whether in the case

* Compare some remarks of Guyau, in *Les Problèmes de l'Esthétique Contemporaine* : "All of us have spoken [the language of verse] at certain moments of our life, oftenest without knowing it; our voices had melodic inflections, our language took on something of that rhythm which charms us in the poet; but the emotional tension passed, and we returned to ordinary speech, which corresponds to the average state of sensibility. . . . To fix and to perfect this music of emotion was at the outset, and still is, the art of the poet. Ideal verse might be defined as the form which every emotional thought tends to assume." (p. 179.) To this view M. Combarieu objects, in *Les Rapports de la Musique et de la Poésie*, maintaining that emotion, so far from seeking regular utterance, breaks down regularity, and that both music and verse, when most passionate, burst the bonds of the normal rhythm, and tend toward lawlessness. From one point of view both these observations are true, and not contradictory. Emotion is itself irregular and lawless; yet in so far as it attempts to become tolerable, or is made pleasurable, it tends toward a restraining regularity of utterance. Compare the remark of Wordsworth, cited just below.

of a drum, a strain of music, or a passage of verse, will stimulate the emotions, exciting them to that end which the drummer, the musician, or the poet desired. Wordsworth suggested that not only does rhythm excite the emotions, but at the same time, by a paradox, it relieves them through its regularity and makes them pleasant rather than painful. "Excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; . . . the co-presence of something regular . . . cannot but have great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion." For this reason, he goes on to observe, painful scenes, such as those of tragedy, are more tolerable—even pleasurable—in verse than in prose; a fact noted by others and of no little importance. Other reasons for this fact will be considered under the next head. Here it is sufficient to see that rhythmical expression stimulates emotion where it is not already present, and forms a satisfying and soothing means of giving it utterance which is natural to all mankind—from the child and the barbarian to the musician and the poet of matured artistic skill. In this way, too, it forms a means of communicating emotion, as when it binds individuals together in the expression of sentiments common to them all, or when it perpetuates the symbols of emotional expression through indefinitely long periods. Thus when a drama of Shakspere's is recited or acted to-day, the listeners are moved by the emotion which he originally expressed for his contemporaries; and this not merely

through the meanings of his words, but through the suggestive cadence of his rhythm.

In the third place, metrical form is a means by which poetry idealizes experiences through the imagination. We have seen something of this aspect of poetry in the preceding chapter,—how it takes the crude materials of common experience, and transmutes them to something of permanent and ideal significance. The change from the broken rhythms of prose speech to the more perfect metrical rhythm of verse is at once a symbol of and an aid to this transformation. As Hazlitt puts it: "The jerks, the breaks, the inequalities and harshnesses of prose are fatal to the flow of a poetical imagination. . . . But poetry 'makes these odds all even.' It is to supply the inherent defect of harmony in the customary mechanism of language, to make the sound an echo to the sense, . . . in short, to take the language of the imagination from off the ground, and enable it to spread its wings where it may indulge its own impulses,

Rhythm as a means of imaginative idealization.

> 'Sailing with supreme dominion
> Through the azure deep of air,'

without being stopped, or fretted, or diverted with the abruptnesses and petty obstacles, and discordant flats and sharps of prose, that poetry was invented." Emerson gives us a similar thought: "You shall not speak ideal truth in prose uncontra-

dicted: you may in verse. The best thoughts run into the best words; imaginative and affectionate thoughts into music and metre." And Mr. Courthope has pointed out how this capacity of metre to lift language above the level of prose enables it to make those daring flights of imaginative style which prose would break down in attempting. "When Marlowe wishes to represent the emotions of Faustus, after he has called up the phantom of Helen of Troy, it is plain that some very rapturous form of expression is needed to convey an adequate idea of such famous beauty. Marlowe rises to the occasion in those 'mighty lines' of his:

> 'Was this the face that launched a thousand ships,
> And burned the topless towers of Ilium?'

But it is certain that he could only have ventured on the sublime audacity of saying that a face launched ships and burned towers, by escaping from the limits of ordinary language, and conveying his metaphor through the harmonious and ecstatic movements of rhythm and metre." The same principle is illustrated by considering how essential is verse form to that poetry which is most purely imaginative. Pope's *Essay on Man* could be paraphrased in prose with little loss; Gray's *Elegy* with less satisfaction; Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality* with still greater impoverishment of its value; while Shelley's *Skylark* turned to prose would be an intolerable absurdity. One might al-

most say (returning to a figure of Hazlitt's) that the imagination moves as much more easily by rhythm than without it as a bird moves more easily by his wings than by his feet.

Rhythm as a modifier of crude reality.

This idealizing power of rhythm has a still deeper significance, which was suggested by the observation in an earlier paragraph that tragic experience is much more tolerable in verse than in prose. This, we saw, might be regarded as partly due to the soothing and controlling effect of the regular stresses of the metre; it is still more clearly due to the fact that the metrical form lifts the material above the plane of crude reality. It not only softens and beautifies it, by imposing upon it the rhythmical form, but seems also in a sense to show its universal significance. The prose utterance of a tragic sufferer is so purely individual as to be almost wholly painful; verse utterance gives a certain impression of universal law underlying his words, and he becomes a spokesman for the sorrows of the whole race. For these reasons prose tragedies are few; in English literature not a single great one can be named.* To the same principle Goethe testified in

* In this connection the query naturally arises: why, then, is prose adequate for the romantic (and sometimes tragic) novel? No single and wholly satisfactory answer can be given. It has already appeared (see chapter i) that the prose romance forms the most difficult problem in the attempt to fix the boundaries between poetic literature and literature in prose. That it is often "poetic," in certain senses of the word, there is no doubt. Two brief answers to

an interesting letter to Schiller, at the time he was engaged in writing *Faust:* "certain tragic scenes," he said, "were written in prose, but they are quite intolerable compared with the others through their naturalness and strength. I am trying therefore to put them into rime, for then the idea is seen as if through a veil, and the direct impression of the tremendous material is softened."* Shakspere's practice on the whole points to the same truth. It is true that in certain of his tragedies (and more especially in the later ones) he uses a considerable amount of serious prose. But it will be found that this can usually be explained in one of two ways: as due to the presence of an extraordinary amount of the intellectual element, blending with the imaginative (as in *Hamlet*), or—what is still more significant for our purpose—to the effort to make tragic suffering as painful as possible. In this latter case we have gone all the way round the circle, to the point where pain will not be veiled or reconciled, but will appear in tremendous and chaotic in-

the question may be suggested. First, the novel—whatever the excellence of its workmanship—may be regarded as one of the less fixed and perfect art forms, demanding the exact adaptation of means to ends less imperiously than (for example) the drama. Secondly, it has rarely been so successful, and has not so completely justified itself, in the region of romance and tragedy as in that of comedy and satire, for which the prose form is obviously more perfectly fitted.

* Letter of 5 May, 1798. See also Schiller's reply, of 8 May. (Jena edition of the Schiller-Goethe Correspondence, 1905, vol. ii, pp. 98 etc.)

tensity. Such a moment is that of the oncoming madness of King Lear, or that when Othello breaks into raving before he falls in a cataleptic trance. These scenes are pathetic, in Wordsworth's phrase, "beyond the bounds of pleasure;" and most readers doubtless pass over them hurriedly, awaiting the moment where the passion is again controlled by the reconciling power of verse,—passages such as—

> "Had it pleased Heaven
> To try me with affliction; had they rained
> All kind of sores and shames on my bare head,
> Steeped me in poverty to the very lips,
> Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes,"—

or such as—

> "Absent thee from felicity awhile,
> And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain."

Through whatever vicissitudes it passes, at its conclusion the tragedy will be found to become metrical and the verse increasingly sweet and regular, the utterance of the defeated actors falling into a steadily pulsing rhythm that seems to symbolize the underlying imperturbable order of the universe.

The place and function of the metrical element in poetry are discussed in a number of passages to which reference has been made in the previous pages: Wordsworth's Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads;* Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria,* chap. xviii; Hazlitt's lecture *On Poetry in General;* Leigh Hunt's Intro-

duction to *Imagination and Fancy;* Watts's article on Poetry in the *Encyclopedia Britannica;* Emerson's *Poetry and Imagination;* Gurney's *Tertium Quid* (essay on "Poets, Critics, and Class-Lists," vol. ii, especially pp. 162-179); Masson's essay on "Prose and Verse;" Courthope's lectures on *Life in Poetry;* Stedman's *Nature and Elements of Poetry,* pp. 51-55; Gummere's *Beginnings of Poetry* (chap. ii). Extended extracts from most of these writers will be found in *English Verse,* pp. 423-436.

Coleridge's discussion of the subject, centering about Wordsworth's theory of poetical style, emphasizes the vital connection between the language of poetry and its metrical form. "As far as metre acts in and for itself, it tends to increase the vivacity and susceptibility both of the general feelings and of the attention. . . . As a medicated atmosphere, or as wine during animated conversation. . . . Metre in itself is simply a stimulant of the attention, and therefore excites the question, Why is the attention to be thus stimulated? Now the question cannot be answered by the pleasure of the metre itself; for this we have shown to be conditional, and dependent on the appropriateness of the thoughts and expressions to which the metrical form is superadded. . . . Metre, therefore, having been connected with poetry most often, and by a peculiar fitness, whatever else is combined with metre must, though it be not itself essentially poetic, have nevertheless some property in common with poetry, as an intermedium of affinity."

Gurney's discussion of the pleasurable elements in verse rhythm is of no little interest and suggestiveness. "When, as in verse, the sounds are pointedly addressed both to the ear and the understanding, the rarity of the combination of aspects contributes a strain of feel-

ing partly akin to that with which we follow an exhibition of skill, and partly to that with which we receive an unexpected gratuity. . . . Rhythm perpetually transfigures the poetical expression of an idea, but makes the existence of that expression possible. . . . Language, which in prose does little more than transmit thought, like clear glass, becomes—even as that becomes—by art's adjustments and the moulding of a measured form, a lens, where the thought takes fire as it passes. . . . It is a sense of combined parts, and their indispensableness one to another, which gives us a sense of permanence in an arch as compared with a casual heap of stones; it is a similar indispensableness which gives to metrical language an air of permanence impossible even to the most harmonious sentence whose sounds conform to no genuine scheme." *

Masson's discussion centers about the proper limits and distinctions of prose and verse as literary forms. (See the passage quoted from the same essay above, p. 26.) His opinions on the question as to just where creative literature insists on becoming metrical may be illustrated by these excerpts: "In the first place, there is a peculiar *richness* of literary concrete of which prose seems to be incapable. By richness of concrete we mean very much what is meant by excess of imagery. . . . In the second place, a certain degree of *arbitrariness* in an imaginative combination seems to place it beyond the capacity of ordinary prose, . . . sometimes taking the character of mere light extravagance, sometimes leading to a ghastly and unearthly

* Compare Lamartine's lines (in *Recueillements Poétiques*), beginning—

> "Tout ce qui sort de l'homme est rapide et fragile,
> Mais le vers est de bronze et la prose d'argile."

effect, and often surprising the mind with unexpected gleams of beauty and grandeur. For, though we have already claimed for prose the capability of pure grandeur and sublimity, we must note here, in the interest of verse, that one source of grandeur is this very license of most arbitrary combination which verse gives."

Gummere's discussion is of special interest as an attempt to prove that from the historical standpoint rhythm is "the essential fact of poetry,"—an argument which cannot be represented by excerpts. His conclusion, based on the study of the communal use of rhythm in the work and play of primitive man, emphasizes its social significance: "In rhythm, in sounds of the human voice, timed to movements of the human body, mankind first discovered that social consent which brought the great joys and the great pains of life into a common utterance. . . . The mere fact of utterance is social; however solitary his thought, a poet's utterance must voice this consent of man with man, and his emotion must fall into rhythm, the one and eternal expression of consent. This, then, is why rhythm will not be banished from poetry so long as poetry shall remain emotional utterance; for rhythm is not only sign and warrant of a social contract stronger, deeper, vaster, than any fancied by Rousseau, but it is the expression of a human sense more keen even than the fear of devils and the love of gods—the sense and sympathy of kind."

Finally, an explanation of the fitness of verse for poetic expression somewhat different from any previously suggested, is that of Professor F. N. Scott, in a paper on "The Most Fundamental Differentia of Poetry and Prose," in the *Publications* of the Modern Language Association, vol. xix, p. 250. With the

fundamental distinction (cited in chapter i, above) that prose is primarily *communicative,* poetry *expressive,* Professor Scott adduces evidence to show that rhythmical form is the natural vehicle for expressive utterance, as distinguished from the broken form of communicative utterance, examples being drawn from the utterances of animals and children. The conclusion is: "We may therefore say that the earliest communicative utterance was characterized by two main features: (1) It had a swaying, fluctuating movement of a seemingly irregular kind; (2) it displayed cumulative intensity or climax, conjoined with diminishing intensity or cadence. These, I need hardly say, are the characteristics of prose in all languages. On the other hand, in the expressive type of speech the individual is busy primarily with his own thoughts and feelings. . . . Under such circumstances it is possible for the rhythm to be shaped by purely physiological or psychological causes. Thus expressive utterance falls naturally into a fairly regular series subject to changes in tempo and pitch corresponding to the successive moods of the speaker. . . . The chief characteristic of expressive utterance is this—that it consists of brief units of approximately equal length so arranged as to constitute a regular rhythmical series. This is the chief formal characteristic of poetry in all languages." (pp. 262, 263.)

Non-rhythmical elements of verse form.

Before leaving the general study of the subject of verse as rhythmical sound, it remains to inquire whether there are not other qualities of sound than those strictly characteristic of rhythm, which play an important part in the external organization of poetry.

Rhythm being formed by the elements that go to form stress and quantity, there are two other elements which theoretically might be concerned,—those of pitch and of tone-quality. Differences of pitch may, as we have seen, sometimes be associated with differences of stress in a fashion peculiarly characteristic of verse;* but in general they are of course used in verse only as they are used in prose, for the purpose of indicating varieties of meaning—grammatical and rhetorical relationships of words. Pitch has therefore no part of its own to play in the organization of verse. With tone-quality we have to concern ourselves somewhat more.

Tone-quality.

Differences of tone-quality, in our speech, so far as they are not characteristic of individual voice utterance, amount simply to the differences in vowel and consonant sounds which go to make up our words. These vowel and consonant sounds are of course never altered in verse from their natural position or pronunciation as found in prose; but the writer of verse exercises more care in selecting words with reference to them than the writer of prose. We have already seen an example of this, in connection with rhythm, in the fact that vowels which are easily prolonged are preferred to bear the accent, and that consonants which take perceptibly long time to utter are avoided in certain parts of the verse. Far

* See especially the theory of Professor Bright, cited on p. 173 above.

more conspicuous is the part played by similarity of vowel and consonant sounds, most familiar in the case of end-rime.* Apart from this choice of sounds with reference to their quantity, and the other sort of choice which results in the grouping of verses by similar (or rimed) sounds at their ends, there is a great variety of more or less obvious means by which poets increase the beauty and the expressiveness of verse through the choice of the tone-quality of its sounds. For the most part the principles governing this choice are in no respect different from those applicable to prose style as used by the most careful writers; but owing to the fact that the writer of verse has the element of beauty before him far more generally than the writer of prose, and to the similar fact that he is more interested in the imaginative suggestiveness of speech sounds, we may properly regard the matter as one with which verse form is concerned.

The subject of rime will be separately discussed later, in connection with the organization of stanzas and other larger units of verse. Here let us briefly notice the less formal varieties of tone-quality as used for the greater beauty or expressiveness of poetical form. They may be considered in two groups: (1) the arrangement of sounds with reference to similarity—a faint appearance of the same principle which is involved in rime: and (2) the

* On this regular use of tone-quality, see chapter vi.

choice of sounds for their imaginative suggestiveness in connection with the idea or the emotion to be represented.

Similarity of sounds.

The most conspicuous examples of the first type are found in the repetition of initial consonants, called *alliteration*. This means of linking together different parts of verses, which in the early period of English verse was used regularly as a structural element, has been a favorite practice of our poets in almost every age. In modern poetry, when used with approximate regularity or with great conspicuousness, it is regarded as a blemish; but its subtle and skilful use is a part of the verse style of most, if not all, important poets. Verses like these,—

"With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain,"
"A mighty fountain momently was forced,"
"Dreamland lies forlorn of light,"
"Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet,"
"Fire answers fire, and through their paly flames,"
"Tinkle homeward through the twilight, stray or stop,"
"As fair as the fabulous asphodels,"
"Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,"
"A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens and kings,"—

all show the endless charm of these parallel sounds, sometimes hidden in the less emphatic portions of the verse, sometimes setting off its chief syllables.

Less notable, but by no means slight, is the part played by the repetition of vowel sounds, called *assonance*. Here it is usually the stressed syllables which are linked together and made even more emphatic than by stress alone; similarity of vowels in unaccented syllables will hardly be noticed. Because of this greater conspicuousness of assonance it would seem to be found less pleasing than the subtler sound-correspondence of alliteration; and when intentionally used, it is more likely to give a definite tone or mood to the whole verse in which it appears. The following are typical examples:

"From poppies breathed; and beds of pleasant green,
Where never yet was creeping creature seen."
"The country cocks do crow, the clocks do toll."
"I arise from dreams of thee,
In the first sweet sleep of night."
"It is an isle under Ionian skies."
"Till you might faint with that delicious pain."
"To height of noblest temper heroes old."
"Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns."
"And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea."
"To dying ears, when unto dying eyes."
"Larch-heart that chars to a chalk-white glow."

A characteristic effect is also produced by the use of vowels or consonants of like but not identical character; for example, of open vowels, like long *o*, Italian *a*, and the like, of liquid consonants (*l*, *m*, *n*,

and *r*), or—in contrast—the more explosive consonants, like *p, b, t,* and *d*. For such combinations one writer* has proposed the name "phonetic syzygy," —that is, the linking together of words by sounds not identical but similar. Robert Louis Stevenson, in discussing the same phenomena, gave as an illustration these lines from Shakspere, of which the linking consonantal sounds are indicated in parenthesis:

"But in the wind and tempest of her frown, (W. P. V. F. ST.)
Distinction, with a loud and powerful fan, (W. P. F. ST. L.)
Puffing at all, winnows the light away." (W. P. F. S. L.)

(*Troilus and Cressida,* I, iii.)

Still more remarkable, and with somewhat more conspicuous—though still incidental—use of alliterative consonants, is such a passage as this from Tennyson's *Enoch Arden:*

"As down the shore he ranged, or all day long
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
A shipwrecked sailor, waiting for a sail:
No sail from day to day, but every day
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
Among the palms and ferns and precipices;
The blaze upon the waters to the east;
The blaze upon his island overhead;

* Professor John Sylvester, in *The Laws of Verse.*

The blaze upon the waters to the west;
Then the great stars that globed themselves in heaven,
The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail."

We may note the organization of consonantal sounds in these lines more easily by setting them down in this fashion:

. d . . . sh . . r . . . d . l .
s . . . . . s . . g . . . g
. s . . . s . . w . . . s . l
. s . . d . . d . . . . . . d
. s . . . b . . . s . . s . s
. . . . p . . . f . . . p . p .
. bl . . p . . . . w . . . . st
. bl . . p . . . . h
. bl . . p . . . w . . . w . st
. . . g . . st . . . g . . . h .
. h . l . . b . l . . . .
. s . . s . . . s . . . . . s . l

Sounds imaginatively suggestive.

The second class of appearances of tone-quality, based on the choice of sounds for their imaginative suggestiveness, is obviously not a wholly different matter from the first class, since it involves the similarity of consonant and vowel sounds in the same way; yet with this difference,—that here we enjoy not merely the similarity of the sounds in itself, but a certain appropriateness in the sounds to the sentiment represented. The simplest instance of this

is the use of what are called onomatopoetic words, —words originally formed, or at any rate conceived to have been formed, in the effort to represent descriptively the sounds of experience. These are in constant use in ordinary speech, and —like all these varieties of tone-quality or tone-color—are peculiar to verse only from its occasional emphasis of their deliberate choice and imaginative use. So Tennyson chooses for the war-song in *The Coming of Arthur* the refrain, characterized by onomatopoetic assonance:

"Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the king reign."

Again, in a song in *The Princess* he uses an extraordinary combination of partly alliterative liquids in describing the sounds of a summer landscape:

"The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees."

Yet once more, and still more notably, in a passage of *Enoch Arden* close to that analyzed a moment ago, Tennyson adapts the sounds of the verse to four distinct parts of the description of the desert landscape:

"The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on the reef,
The moving whisper of huge trees that branched
And blossomed in the zenith, or the sweep
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave."

Browning will be found more often using combinations of sounds which aid in the expression of irregular, distorted, or grotesque images. Thus in *The Heretic's Tragedy* the description of the kindling of the executioners' fire involves such curiously sounding verses as—

"Pine stump split deftly, dry as pith;"

and in *Caliban* the picture of the monster sprawling in the ooze of his pit is enhanced by combinations like "fists clenched to prop his chin" and "kicks both feet in the cool slush." Milton often shows an obviously deliberate choice of harsh, as well as melodious, sounds, for descriptive emphasis, as in the account of the infernal doors which "on their hinges grate harsh thunder," or the songs of the false shepherds which

"Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw."

In other instances the appropriateness of the sounds to the descriptive mood is less obvious and less easy to explain, yet such as a skilful reader will make instant use of: examples may be found in the fairy speeches of Titania in Shakspere's *Midsummer Night's Dream,* the opening stanzas of Thomson's *Castle of Indolence,* and the decaying garden of Shelley's *Sensitive Plant,* where

"plants at whose names the verse feels loath
Filled the place with a monstrous under growth,

Prickly, and pulpous, and blistering, and blue,
Livid, and starred with a lurid dew."

Great caution should be observed in the analysis of such descriptive or suggestive tone-color as we have been considering, since it is easy to exaggerate the part played by the mere sounds of the verse, even where they are most conspicuous. It will almost invariably be found that sounds are not of themselves suggestive of definite objects or even of definite moods, but that they emphasize and fill out suggestions dependent on the meaning of words. The same is true of instrumental music. Mr. Gurney (in an essay in *Tertium Quid*) has gone so far as to say that a foreigner, wholly ignorant of the English language, would not be able to distinguish, merely as sound, between the most melodious passage in English literature and an advertisement from the daily paper. And Professor Lewis more recently (in *The Principles of English Verse*) has adopted an almost excessively cautious attitude toward the phenomena we have been studying. "When Tennyson speaks of the shrill-edged shriek of a mother, his words suggest with peculiar vividness the idea of a shriek; but when you speak of stars that shyly shimmer, the same sounds only intensify the idea of shy shimmering." The illustration is admirably instructive as to the danger of trying to generalize on the subject of the suggestive power of particular sounds; yet surely to

say that the alliteration merely *emphasizes* the meaning of the words is to err on the other side. Both "shriek" and "shimmer" are essentially descriptive words; apart from their meaning, they convey no definite ideas, but when one understands what particular type of sound or movement the "sh" is intended for the moment to suggest, it has its own characteristic power of suggesting that sound or movement. And the other sounds in these two words do very much to make their different meanings clear to the imagination. Long ago Dr. Samuel Johnson was the skeptic, for his time, as to the power of sound-values in descriptive poetry, not even admitting that Milton's famous line—

"Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait"—

could be said by its sound to represent the "corporal bulk" of the leviathans; for, said he, "sound can resemble nothing but sound." On the contrary, nothing is more obvious and more important than the power of sound to suggest color, movement, and mood; yet it is of course true that the sounds of Milton's line do not of themselves *describe* the leviathan's bulk; they merely suggest it to the imagination in a peculiarly vivid manner.* So everywhere the effect of the sound-quality is not to

* In the same connection Dr. Johnson brought together three Latin verses where the unusual appearance of a monosyllable at the end of the hexameter line had been noted by the critics as of suggestively descriptive value :

convey definite ideas, but to fit itself to those involved in the meaning or the mood of the passage.

Such phenomena as those considered under the two heads discussed in the foregoing pages—the arrangement of sounds with reference to similarity, and the choice of sounds for their imaginative suggestiveness or appropriateness—are the most conspicuous and interesting, as well as those most consciously used, in the perfecting of verse form. Yet it would perhaps be safe to say that still more important are the less obvious and less consciously arranged sequences of sound-quality which perpetually give color to the sounds of good poetry. The term *melody* is commonly used of the effect produced by these sequences, since the pleasure derived from the sounds of the verse is felt to be analogous to that derived from the modulations of a tune. "Orchestration" would perhaps be a more accurately figurative expression. The poet chooses the sounds of his words as the composer arranges for the use of the orchestral instruments of different quality (or

Beauty or melody in verse sounds.

"Vertitur interea coelum, et ruit oceano nox."
"Sternitur, exanimisque tremens procumbit humi bos."
"Parturiunt montes; nascetur ridiculus mus."

It would be a strange conformity, said Johnson, between "the sudden succession of night to day, the fall of an ox under a blow, and the birth of a mouse from a mountain" (*Rambler*, No. 94). Yet it is perfectly clear that in each case there is the element of abrupt action to be described, and that this is imaginatively vivified by the unexpected emphatic monosyllable.

the different stops of the organ), quite apart from melody and rhythm. Only here, as elsewhere, he is not free in his choice, but must at the same time choose the sounds which are already fitted to express his meaning and to fall into the dominant rhythm. Words will therefore rarely be chosen primarily for their tone-quality, and the attainment of beauty in this direction will be more often the result of genius or inspiration than of deliberation. From this standpoint reappears, then, the wonderful complexity of the art of the poet. For even if verse be made to express adequate thought and genuine emotion, and in addition be fitted to accurate and pleasing rhythm, there still remains the element of beauty of sound, to distinguish the product of the mere prentice workman from that of the master.

Interesting discussions of tone-quality in verse will be found in Guest's *English Rhythms*, chap. ii; Lanier's *Science of English Verse,* Part iii; Corson's *Primer of English Verse,* chap. ii; Edmund Gurney's *Tertium Quid* and *The Power of Sound;* G. L. Raymond's *Poetry as a Representative Art* and *Rhythm and Harmony in Poetry and Music;* Stevenson's essay on "Some Technical Elements of Style in Literature;" Grant Allen's *Physiological Æsthetics;* A. H. Tolman's *Hamlet and Other Essays.* See also *English Verse,* pp. 135-147. Professor Tolman's essay, on "The Symbolic Value of English Sounds," contains a particularly definite account of the various vowel sounds with reference to their emotional suggestiveness, based on this table:

i as in little	i as in I	oo as in wood
e " met	u " due	ow " cow
a " mat	a " what	o " gold
e " mete	a " father	oo " gloom
ai " fair	oi " boil	aw " awe
a " mate	u " but	

" The sounds at the beginning of this scale are especially fitted to express uncontrollable joy and delight, gayety, triviality, rapid movement, brightness, delicacy, and physical littleness; the sounds at the end are peculiarly adapted to express horror, solemnity, awe, deep grief, slowness of motion, darkness, and extreme or oppressive greatness of size. . . . The vowels have been arranged, on the whole, in accordance with what is called natural, or inherent pitch. . . . The sounds at the beginning of the list have a natural high pitch; the ideas and feelings which find their most fitting expression through these vowels are those which all elocutionists would express by the use of a high pitch. The sentiments that are assigned to the vowels of low natural pitch are brought out by a low pitch in expressive reading. What is more natural than that the individual vowel sounds shall be felt to be, according to their natural pitch, the best sound-representatives of these various feelings and ideas?" (pp. 152-154.)

Of a different character is the discussion of Mr. Charles E. Russell, in an article on " Swinburne and Music," in the *North American Review* for November, 1907. Mr. Russell exaggerates, but suggestively exemplifies, the analogy between not only the rhythmical, but the harmonic elements of music and the sounds of verse. " What we call 'alliteration' is, in the hands of the melodist, nothing more nor less than the working out of the principle of harmonics

contained in the progress of the chord. . . . Take one of the lines that have been adversely criticised for excessive alliteration:

'To the low, last edge of the long, lone land.'

'Low,' 'long' and 'lone' are really related minor chords based upon principles familiar to most students of music. . . . Another pertinent illustration of chord values that will occur instantly to all Swinburnians is the line in *Laus Veneris,*

'The wind's wet wings and fingers drip with rain,'

where the base of the chords may be regarded as the sound of W; the changing vowels supply the other notes, and the effects are identical with the changed chords in a dominant key in music, a device equally reasonable in poetry."

Compare the similar remarks of Guyau, quoted on p. 300 below.

CHAPTER V.

ENGLISH METRES.

THUS far we have considered those aspects of the external form of poetry which are fundamental in character, especially the way in which the sounds of the English language adapt themselves to rhythmical form, and the reasons why this rhythmical form is adapted to the imaginative ends of poetry. It remains to take up more in detail the different forms of metre which English poetry actually presents, the elements into which they may be separated, the means by which they may most conveniently be described, and the variations from their typical forms which increase both the complexity and the beauty of our poetical rhythms.

It has already appeared that metre differs from mere rhythm in that it persists with some continuity and divides itself into regular groups of those time-intervals, marked by stresses, of which the basic rhythm is composed. These groups, or larger units of the metre, are commonly called *verses*. We have, then, as the two principal elements of metre the rhythmical unit, most often called a *foot*, and the larger

Two units of metre.

unit made up of a number of feet so grouped as to form a verse.

The foot.

Both these units of rhythmical time are of course filled up by syllables, and the usage of our verse has resulted in fixing the normal number of syllables which in any given metre go to compose them. In a sense this is only an incidental fact, since, as we have seen, rhythm does not require a fixed number of sounds, but only that those sounds shall maintain fixed relations of stress and time; and at any time a verse may be found actually to vary from its characteristic number of syllabic parts. But in modern English verse the number has tended to become so fixed that it forms a convenient basis for describing and classifying both verses and feet. Thus we call some metres dissyllabic, because they are normally divisible into feet of two syllables, and others trisyllabic, because they are normally divisible into feet of three syllables. In actual usage, then, the term "foot" stands for the blending of two different entities, or for either alone: the time-interval which is the unit of the rhythm, and the group of syllables which normally fill that time-interval. Certain names, borrowed originally from Greek and Latin prosody (in which they mean something quite different from what they mean for English verse), are applied to the foot, according to the number and the order of the stressed and unstressed syllables which normally

compose it. Thus a foot made up of (or, more accurately speaking, *filled up by*) one unstressed syllable plus a stressed syllable is called an *iambus;* a foot made up of a stressed syllable plus an unstressed syllable is called a *trochee;* a foot made up of two unstressed syllables plus a stressed syllable is called an *anapest;* and a foot made up of a stressed syllable plus two unstressed syllables is called a *dactyl.* Examples of these feet are found in the successive words *defy, tender, cavalier, silently.* But it is rarely (outside of trochaic metres) that the individual feet correspond with individual words, the metrical units being more likely to conflict with the grammatical and rhetorical divisions of the sentence than to conform to them.

This circumstance, that the grouping of syllables from the rhetorical standpoint fails to correspond with their grouping from the metrical standpoint, has led some writers to question the existence, in English verse, of anything which can properly be called a *foot.* Such a group of syllables, it is said, as

"Brightest | and best | of the sons | of the morning,"

naturally divides itself in the way indicated; and to make the division in this way—

Brightest and | best of the | sons of the | morning—

is to wrest them out of their natural relations. This

objection would be fatal if the foot were considered as composed primarily of the groups of syllables which form the phrases of ordinary speech. But, as we have seen, the foot is properly to be regarded as made up of syllables grouped with arbitrary reference to the time-intervals of the rhythm, and has nothing whatever to do with their ordinary rhetorical relations. Neither must the term be assumed to imply that the syllables of all verses are actually uttered in the exact time which their arrangement into feet would imply,—any more than one assumes that all the quarter notes, or all the measures, of a given piece of music are actually made to fill precisely equal periods of time.

The objection just cited, and the illustration, are from Mr. Robert Bridges, who, in the Appendix to *Milton's Prosody*, discusses the stress relations of English verses as the basis of their scansion and analysis. Assuming that each principal stress is the nucleus of the metrical unit, gathering about itself the lighter syllables according to their natural attraction to it in common speech utterance, Mr. Bridges lays down these rules:

I. The stress governs the rhythm.

II. The stresses must all be true speech-stresses.

III. A stress has more carrying power over the syllable next to it, than it has over a syllable removed from it by an intervening syllable.

IV. A stress has a peculiarly strong attraction for its own proclitics and enclitics.

V. A stress will not carry a heavy syllable which is removed from it by another syllable; i. e., a heavy

syllable must be contiguous with the stressed syllable that carries it.

VI. A stress will not carry more than one heavy syllable or two light syllables on the same side of it.

VII. In some metres when four, and in any metre when more than four, unstressed syllables occur together, they will occupy the place of a stress, which may be said to be distributed over them; and a line in which such a collection of syllables occurs will lack one of its stresses.

This system, it should be observed, Mr. Bridges does not apply in the same form to the metre of five-stress iambics, which he calls "syllabic" rather than "accentual" verse. The whole essay is a suggestive one, and deserves study; yet it certainly tends to give too little heed to the essentially temporal basis of rhythm, and to confuse metrical units with those grammatical or rhetorical divisions of speech with which they coincide only in part. A similar exaggeration of the element of stress, and another attempt to find a rhetorical rather than a genuinely metrical system of verse analysis, may be found in Liddell's *Introduction to the Study of Poetry.* Similar in principle, again, is the effort of Professor Skeat (Transactions of the London Philological Society, 1897-98) to find a method of analysis based on "the natural method of grouping the syllables around the accented syllables with which, in actual pronunciation, they are associated." * The systems of all three writers are so completely at variance with that which views metre fundamentally as the fitting of words and

* Both this essay and that of Bridges, together with certain verse dramas of the latter intended to illustrate the practical possibilities of his theory, are critically examined by Mayor in chapter vii of the second edition of *Chapters on English Metre.*

phrases to a typical rhythmical flow, the perpetually unvarying norm to which they continually approximate, that no compromise or reconciliation between the two standpoints seems to be possible.

Significance of various names of feet.

To say, then, that iambic verse and trochaic verse are regularly composed of feet made up of two syllables, one stressed and the other unstressed, is a matter of convenience, and represents a particular effect which these dissyllabic metres, as developed by usage, have on the ear, but is not a description of their essential *rhythmical* character. The same thing is true of music; a composition each measure of which is normally made up of three quarter notes produces a different effect on the ear from one whose measures are normally filled by two quarter notes or by two eighth notes, though it does not follow that the actual time-length of the measures is different. The actual time-length of the rhythmical unit is a matter which the individual player of music and the individual reader of poetry determine each for himself in large measure. In music, it is instructive to notice, there is no distinction corresponding to the difference between iambic and trochaic metres, or to the difference between anapestic and dactylic metres, because in music the stressed note is always normally the first note in the musical measure. In verse we find it convenient, and representative of different metrical effects, to distinguish between the metre which normally begins with a stressed syllable and

that which normally begins with an unstressed syllable. This difference in metrical effect would appear to be due to two causes: (1) a verse seems to begin more abruptly, and to start off with a different cadence, when it strikes at once the principally stressed syllable of a word or sentence, than when it strikes that syllable only after one bearing little or no stress; and (2) owing to the fact that dissyllabic English words are far more commonly stressed on the first syllable than on the second, verse of the former type will permit a far more constant conformity between the separate words and the rhythmical units—as in the line

"Maiden, | crowned with | glossy | blackness"—

than in the verse of the latter type. But this distinction is, after all, a superficial one, depending not on the nature of the rhythm concerned but on where we begin to count or measure it. Such verse as

"Spied a blossom passing fair"

has the same rhythm whether we think of it as iambic verse with the first syllable missing, or trochaic verse with the last syllable missing. Such a verse as

"We met an host and quelled it"

has the same rhythm whether we think of it as iambic verse with an extra syllable at the end, or

trochaic verse with an extra syllable at the beginning. Such a verse as

"Bury your steel in the bosoms of Gath"

has the same rhythm whether we think of it as dactylic, with the last two syllables missing, or anapestic with the first two syllables missing.

We may illustrate the same fact by combining a bit of iambic metre with one unquestionably trochaic, simply by providing a connecting syllable, and making the rhythm continuous:

"To live, and see her learn, and learn by her; and so
to be the man and leave the artist."

The first verse ends at the semicolon; the second begins with "so" and is trochaic (from Browning's *One Word More*); but when the two are put together in this way, the second verse, beginning with "and," becomes iambic instantly—though of course without changing its rhythmical nature—and the last syllable comes to be regarded as an additional feminine ending. Finally, the same principle is revealed by the fact that one is very often in doubt whether to name a trisyllabic metre anapestic or dactylic; the reason being that as English dactylic verse is nearly always catalectic—that is, omits the final unstressed syllables—and anapestic verse is very freely truncated at the beginning—omitting one or both of the initial unstressed syllables—there is nothing save the predominating tendency of the poem to guide us as to what may be called its normal metre.

The statement that the fundamental rhythms of

iambic and trochaic verse (or of anapestic and dactylic) are not necessarily different is not universally believed. Thus Professor Saintsbury (*Hist. of Eng. Prosody,* i, 9) expresses the belief that the rhythm of

When | the Brit- | ish War- | rior Queen

and

When the | British | Warrior | Queen

are "irreconcilably different. The base-rhythms of the two plans are diametrically opposed, the poetical effect is entirely unlike, and I can hardly perceive any concordat or compromise as to English verse being possible between those who perceive, and those who do not perceive, this difference." There is no question, of course, that the prevalence of such a verse as that cited, beginning with a stressed syllable, produces a different "poetical effect" from the more common type of verse beginning with an unstressed syllable. But how the difference in naming or dividing of feet can change the rhythm—this no one has yet clearly shown. It is possible that, from causes almost too subtle to try to explain, we tend to read trochaic metres with slightly different lengths of time-interval from iambic metres;* but that this difference is neither

* This conjecture would seem to be borne out by the researches of Messrs. A. S. Hurst and John McKay, reported in *University of Toronto Studies* for 1889 ("Experiments on Time Relations of Poetical Metres") according to which the dactyl and trochee were found of shorter duration than the anapest and iambus. On the other hand Messrs. N. Triplett and E. C. Sanford, in "Studies of Rhythm and Meter" appearing in the *Amer. Journal of Psychology*, vol. xii (1901), report iambs as taking less time than trochees. The different results again suggest that the matter is one of subjective interpretation merely.

necessary nor essential it is believed has been demonstrated by the illustrations given above. It may be worth while in the same connection to point out that it is also true that there is no *necessary* difference of rhythm between the iambic and anapestic measures, as is shown by the ease with which some poems glide from one into the other without any obvious change of rhythmical character. That large group of metres called by Schipper "iambic-anapestic," in which one cannot be certain which is the prevailing type, depends for its right to exist on this fact. Difference in the length of the rhythmical units is never absolutely dependent on the number of syllables they contain; and a foot of three syllables in some poems will undoubtedly be given less time than a foot of two syllables in others. All of which, though important to the serious student of verse, does not in the least affect the common and correct impression that the four great types of metre produce quite different effects owing to the way in which our words fit themselves to the different arrangement of stresses. This matter is discussed with admirable clearness by Mr. Omond, in *A Study of Metre*. In speaking of "duple rising" and "duple falling" metre, as he prefers to call iambic and trochaic, he says: "These are really subdivisions of the same metre. Our poets, as has been already noted, pass backwards and forwards from one form to the other at their pleasure. Critics have professed to find different effects in the two types; but in view of this interchangeability such professions must be received with distrust. Others would fain annihilate the distinction by writing both alike. As in music the accented note comes first in a bar, so in verse—they say—the syllable of main accentuation should always begin the period. In itself this latter

idea is harmless. Where we place the division-mark matters little, so long as uniformity is maintained. Marks for distinguishing periods, like lines showing bars in music, are mere aids to the eye. . . . There is therefore no real objection to adopting this method, if any one greatly desires it; but there are circumstances which make it less natural and convenient in metre than in music, as a moment's consideration will show." (pp. 61, 62.)

Practical methods of naming metres.

For practical purposes, the beginning of the verse will be found to be the place where one may best look for the normal metre, since it affects the ear more promptly than the end, and is less frequently altered.* Thus the line

"Spied a blossom passing fair"

is best called trochaic verse, especially if one discovers that in the poem from which it is taken the large majority of verses begin with the stressed syllable. The omission of the light syllable at the end is not unusual or striking. The line

"We met an host and quelled it"

is best called iambic verse, because it represents a metre regularly beginning with the unstressed syllable; and the addition of a light syllable at the end of such verse is not unusual. We may expect, then,

* Less frequently, that is, by way of addition or subtraction, while on the other hand it is the favorite place for alterations of stress, such as are avoided at the end of the verse.

that iambic and anapestic verses will easily take on additional syllables at the end; they will less easily take them on at the beginning, and will be still less likely to omit a syllable at the beginning. On the other hand, trochaic and dactylic verses will easily lose a light syllable at the end of the verse, and will somewhat less easily take one on at the beginning. To omit the stressed syllable at the end of iambic or anapestic verse, or at the beginning of trochaic or dactylic, would of course change the whole character of the rhythm, which depends on the regular recurrence of stress.

We find it convenient, then, to recognize these four types of metre, which group themselves in two different ways. Iambic and trochaic verse are alike in being dissyllabic, anapestic and dactylic are alike in being trisyllabic. But iambic and anapestic are alike in being formed by what is called "rising" or "ascending" rhythm, unstressed syllables being followed by stressed; and trochaic and dactylic are alike in being formed by "falling" or "descending" rhythm, stressed syllables being regularly followed by unstressed. The two types of rising rhythm are by far the most familiar in English poetry, for reasons which will be considered somewhat later.

Four principal metrical types.

It remains to inquire whether other types of feet are to be found in our verse besides the four already considered. All familiar English metres are made up of these four; but exceptional arrange-

ments of stresses within the verse are constantly found, and it is convenient to use certain other names in describing them. Thus we sometimes find a foot in which not one, but both, syllables are stressed. In

Various exceptional feet.

"The cumbrous elements—Earth, Flood, Air, Fire"

this is true of both the fourth and the fifth foot. Such feet are conveniently called *spondees*. On the other hand, we sometimes (less frequently) find a foot in which neither syllable is stressed; as the fourth of this verse—

"Who thought the power of monarchy too much."

Such feet are conveniently called *pyrrhics*. For obvious reasons, no metre could be wholly composed of either spondees or pyrrhics. There still remain those compromised relations of stress which were discussed in the preceding chapter; we need names for feet which involve secondary stress as well as full-stress and no-stress, but no such names are in use. The general tendency to reduce our metres to fully stressed and wholly unstressed syllables, together with the fact that the secondarily stressed syllable in metre is hard to define or perfectly agree upon, has prevented the adoption of any terminology which recognizes the existence of feet partly composed of unstressed syllables. With this exception, the six feet already considered (iambus,

trochee, anapest, dactyl, spondee, pyrrhic) will serve for the description of all familiar metrical phenomena, so far as they depend on arrangements of stress.

Certain other feet are recognized by some writers as occurring in English verse, and therefore deserve mention. The *amphibrach,* a foot consisting of a stressed syllable between two unstressed, may be called the unit of rhythm in such a verse as

"And into | the midnight | we galloped | abreast."

But a division into anapests, with initial truncation

(And in | to the mid | night we gal | loped abreast),

is quite as satisfactory, since—to repeat what has already been said more than once—the phrase divisions have nothing to do with the feet. There is more reason for viewing the amphibrach as an exceptional substituted foot in such a verse as this, which Mr. Omond wishes to divide as indicated:

By day | a cloud, | by night | *a pillar* | of fire.

But since "a pil-" is a tolerable iambus, the more conventional method of calling the fifth foot an anapest is adequate.

Some writers, again, recognize a foot of three unstressed syllables called the *tribrach,* in such verses as these:

From their | pure in | *fluence to* | pervade | the room.
Mista | ken men | and pa | *triots in* | their hearts.

Unquestionably the term is sometimes convenient; yet the succession of four unstressed syllables is usually avoided either by slurring the first two or by putting a slight secondary stress on the third,—in other words, treating the foot as a pyrrhic or an anapest.

Occasionally the term *choriambus* is used of English verses,—a foot made up of two light syllables between two stressed ones. It is impossible, however, that such a combination should take the place of a single rhythmical unit; where occurring, it will be found to take the place of two feet in the time of the verse, and should therefore be divided into two feet,—the number of stresses, as usual, indicating the number of feet. In an interesting poem called *Choriambics,* Swinburne has imitated the classical rhythm made up of this foot:

"Love, what ailed thee to leave life that was made
lovely, we thought, with love?"

But to make this really rhythmical to English ears, it is necessary to treat it as eight-stress dactylic verse, with a number of missing light syllables.

Finally, there is a type of verse, developed especially in quite recent English poetry, which seems to demand the recognition of a still different type of foot, and for which the name "paeonic" has been proposed by certain critics. The *paeon* (if, as usual, we change the elements of the classical terminology from quantity to stress) is a foot made up of one stressed and three unstressed syllables. An example of the type of metre referred to is this verse from Kipling's *Song of the English:*

"Humble ye, my people, and be fearful in your
mirth;"

or this, from a song by Jean Ingelow:

"In the morning, O so early, my beloved, my beloved."

The paeonic foot may certainly be made applicable to this type of metre; yet it will be observed that there is a regular alternation of secondary stresses between the wholly unstressed syllables,—so that the measure might be described as seven-stress trochaic, with every alternate foot showing only a secondary stress. From the same standpoint, the term *ditrochee,* or *trochaic dipody,* might be regarded as more accurate than the term *paeon;* both these names being used, in classical prosody, to describe a pair of trochaic feet of which one bore a stronger ictus or stress than the other.

It is important to emphasize the fact that all these names of feet refer to quite different phenomena in English metres from those described in classical terminology. In the latter, an iambus means a foot made up of a short syllable plus a long, the matter of stress being incidental and not defined; in the former, it means a foot made up of an unstressed syllable plus a stress, the matter of length being incidental and not defined. The same distinction of course applies to all the other terms. For reasons discussed in chapter iv, the two aspects of the term will often be applicable at once; thus the word *destroy* is an iambus whether the term be used with reference to stress or quantity, and the word *slaughter* is a trochee from either standpoint. It was this frequent coincidence of length and stress, of shortness and no-stress, that originally led to the adoption of the classical terms in the English sense,—an adoption which has undoubtedly done much to confuse the minds of students of prosody. It has now been so gener-

ally made, however, and the terminology has become so familiar in the case of the most common metrical feet, that we can perhaps do no better than go on with the free use of still other terms, with the frank understanding that we turn them over to meanings peculiar to our own metres. The effort to use musical notation for our verse, and to dispense with its scansion in terms of feet, is in part due to the sense of incongruity felt by many scholars in the English use of the classical terminology. But the musical notation requires us, as is pointed out elsewhere (see chapter iv), to fix the time lengths of our syllables with an accuracy which we are hardly prepared to undertake; it provides no means of indicating any other stresses than those regularly assumed to occur at the beginning of the measure; and it fails quite as completely as the classical terminology to provide a means of marking the distinction between full and secondary stresses. English usage and English discrimination demand, on the whole, a system based on the comparatively regular use of stressed and unstressed syllables in our verse, leaving the more complex variation of syllabic quantities to implication and individual interpretation.

As for the graphic representation of metres, that commonly used for classical prosody has, like its terms, been borrowed for English, with a corresponding change of meaning from long and short to stressed and unstressed for the superscribed macron and breve. For secondary or compromised stresses the combination of the two marks, which in the classical notation denotes a syllable of "common" quantity, is serviceable. The vertical line of division between the rhythmical units or feet is common to both systems. A caret indicates a missing syllable; and an extra syllable prefixed or added to the verse may be sepa-

rated from the adjacent foot by a vertical curve. The following verses will indicate how this system adapts itself to several varieties of metre:

Ă thĭng | ŏf bēau | tў ĭs | ă jōy | fŏrĕv(er

Rōsĕs | ĭn hēaps | wĕre thĕre, | bŏth rĕd | ănd whīte

Ŏf sŏme | prĕcĭp | ĭtoŭs rĭv | ŭlĕt tŏ | thĕ wāve

Soŭls ŏf | Poĕts | dēad ănd | gōne^

Ĭ ăm mōn | ărch ŏf āll | Ĭ sŭr vēy

^My rĭght | thĕre ĭs nōne | tŏ dĭspūte

Thĭs ĭs ă | sprāy thĕ bĭrd | clung tŏ^

Kĕntĭsh Sĭr | Byng^^ | stŏod fŏr hĭs | Kĭng^^

Tĭnklĕ | hōmewărd | thrŏugh thĕ | twĭlĭght, | strāy ŏr | stōp^

or Tĭnklĕ | hōmewărd thrŏugh thĕ | twĭlĭght, strāy ŏr | stōp^

Ăpol | lŏ frŏm | hĭs shrīne

^Cān | nŏ mōre | dĭvīne

Thĕ mōun | tăin shēep | ăre swēet(er

But)thĕ vāl | lĕy shēep | ăre fāt(ter

And ăs | Ĭ stōoped, | hĕr ōwn | lĭps rī | sĭng thēre

Ănd āuld | ^ lāng | ^ syne

If, however, it is desired to reserve this system of marking for distinctions of quantity, in the effort to indicate longs and shorts for the syllables of English verse, it may easily be combined with the marks com-

monly used in other connections to indicate full and secondary stress. Thus:

′ ′ ′ ′ ″
Ōnlў | ō̤ur mī̤r | rored ēyes | met sī̤ | lĕntlў.

But, for reasons already discussed, it is far more difficult to mark quantities so as to represent any real consensus of opinion than to mark stresses. In the line just quoted, for example, there would be legitimate differences of opinion as to the length of the second syllable of "silently" and both syllables of "mirrored."

Some, even of those who admit the existence of the equal time-units of our metres, prefer to avoid marking verses with foot divisions, because it implies a mechanical regularity in the actual intervals within which pairs of syllables are uttered, which is not warranted by the facts. Thus Mr. Omond instances the line—

The one | remains, | the man | y change | and pass;

and suggests that the second syllable of "many" should perhaps be looked at as "on the boundary-line between the third and fourth periods, not to be assigned definitely to either." The objection is in theory unquestionably sound.* Since the foot means

* As a matter of fact, if the sounds of verse were to be divided into groups based on the time-intervals forming the exact units of the rhythm, we should probably have to begin each foot with a stressed vowel, and divide thus: "The | one rem | ains the m | any ch | ange and p | ass." This at least is indicated by the experiments of M. Verrier (see the bibliographical appendix), who found, in making phonographic records of recited verse, that equal intervals were indicated if measured from stressed vowel to stressed vowel, but not otherwise. The prevalent confusion between the conception of the unit of verse as consisting of a fixed time-interval, and the

primarily the typical time-interval, and since syllables are not actually brought into regular conformity with these intervals, to divide ordinary five-stress verse into five feet of two syllables each is to fail properly to represent its real cadences. Yet for practical purposes the division is very useful; enabling one to say, for example, that a trochee in the fourth foot is almost never found save after a pause, that a pyrrhic in the third foot is likely to be followed by a spondee in the fourth, and so *ad infinitum*. No one with any proper understanding of verse will be misled by the supposition that in such cases the fourth foot must be pronounced in exactly the time given to the others.

The naming and classification of metres is discussed interestingly by Mr. J. B. Mayor in his *Chapters on English Metre* (chaps. viii and ix). The abundant illustrations given make it possible for any student of the subject to determine certainly how far the system used satisfies his ear. For indicating differences of stress, Mayor commonly uses the system (previously adopted by A. J. Ellis) of subscribed figures,—2 denoting full stress (or unusually heavy stress), 1 half stress (or average stress), and 0 no stress. Thus:

Fluctua | ted as flow | ers in storm, | some red | some pale.
2 0 1 0 0 1 0 0 1 1 2 1 2

conception of it as consisting of a fixed number of syllables, lies deep in the nature and history of English verse, and perhaps can never be escaped. The former conception is particularly associated with our lyrical measures, which are most nearly analogous to musical rhythm; the latter belongs to our decasyllabic ("heroic") verse, which came into English under the influence of foreign, syllable-counting metres, and has persistently maintained a fixed syllabic structure at the same time that it has submitted itself to the rhythmical laws inherent in the language. See the remarks of Mr. Bridges quoted in the note on page 272 below.

This method (for a further illustration of which see *English Verse,* p. 4), while entirely practicable if one is content to mark three degrees of stress, is open to the objections that it does not suggest the phenomena to the eye so quickly and naturally as the method of dashes and breves, and that it does suggest a mathematical exactness of relation between stresses which one is ill disposed to affirm. Still another method, favored by some critics (e. g. Corson in his *Primer of English Verse*), is to use the symbol *x* for a stressed syllable and *a* for an unstressed; thus describing five-stress iambic verse as 5*ax,* four-stress anapestic as 4*aax,* and so forth. While sometimes convenient, this system is more completely arbitrary than any of the others, and—what is more serious—provides no means for distinguishing between primary and secondary stress. For still another system, the curious student may see Liddell's *Introduction to the Study of Poetry.*

Variations from regular metrical form.

We have then four prevailing types of metre, based on four types of foot as distinguished by the arrangement of stressed and unstressed syllables, and may name all common metres by indicating the typical foot and the number of feet; as, two-stress iambic, three-stress trochaic, and the like.* We have also to

* For obvious reasons, it is less satisfactory to name metres by the number of syllables, possible variations in this being constantly assumed. By many critics the classical terms trimeter, pentameter, etc., are preferred to "three-stress," "five-stress," etc.; but these terms, aside from the fact that they do not make the nature of the metre so explicit as the others, are open to the objection of being ambiguous. One cannot be sure whether "iambic trimeter" means a verse of three iambs or (as commonly in classical prosody) one of six iambs grouped in pairs.

recognize that the substitution of another foot than that typical of the metre is a frequent occurrence. Already we have seen two common types of this alteration of the regular rhythm: where the stress in a foot is deficient (as when a pyrrhic is used in place of an iambus), and where the stress is excessive (as when a spondee is used). It will be noticed that these two variations are very frequently found together, the general level of stress in the verse being maintained. A characteristic and beautiful example of spondee followed by pyrrhic is in this verse from Tennyson's *Geraint and Enid*:

"O'er the four rivers the first roses blew,"—

where, however, a following spondee intervenes to prevent the succession of three wholly unstressed syllables.

Quite as familiar as excess or deficiency of stress is the inversion of an iambus by the substitution of a trochee, especially at the beginning of the verse and after the medial pause; as in—

"Gorged with the dearest morsel of the earth"

and

"Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm."

Less frequent, but still very familiar, is the addition of an extra light syllable; a change which, in

iambic verse, means the substitution of an anapest. Examples are:

"Concerns of the particular hearth and home,"

and

"Let me see, let me see, is not the leaf turn'd down?"

Such trisyllabic substitutions, in which the extra syllable clearly breaks the flow of the metre, are to be distinguished from those which are so readily obscured in pronunciation, by slurring or elision, as to leave the foot substantially dissyllabic. Thus, although the word *radiance* contains three syllables, and *disobedience* five, the last two of these syllables are uttered practically as one, when the metre suggests such compression, and do not alter the iambic cadence of such verses as—

"Girt with omnipotence, with radiance crowned,"

and

"Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit."

The same thing is true when a final vowel precedes an unstressed initial vowel of the following word, as "many a," "the awakened," and the like. Again, words ending in unstressed *-on* and *-en*, like *prison* and *given*, are treated either as monosyllables or dissyllables, as the metre may suggest; as monosyllables particularly, when they precede an initial vowel. All these, it will be observed, are simply the natural licenses of rapid utterance, familiar in prose and availed of by verse.

In modern verse, elision, properly speaking, is rarely used, the vowels in question being *slurred*, that is, pronounced lightly, rather than cut out altogether. In earlier periods such forms as "th' awakened" are thought to imply a complete elision, and some would still read Milton's verse, for example, in this way. The matter is one on which critics differ widely, and is interesting, but chiefly from an historical standpoint; hence it cannot be discussed here. The student will find a statement of one side in Masson's edition of Milton, vol. ii, p. 215, and of the other side in articles by Walter Thomas in the *Modern Language Review* for July and October, 1907. Masson says: "When, in the original edition of *Paradise Lost*, I find *flamed* spelt *flam'd* or Heaven spelt *Heav'n*, ... I take the apostrophe as an express direction to omit the *e* sound and pronounce the words as monosyllables; but I cannot accept the apostrophe as an elision-mark of precisely the same significance in the lines 'Above th' Aonian mount, while it pursues,' and 'That led th' imbattelld Seraphim to war,'—for these reasons: (1) Because the strict utterances *th'Aonian* and *thimbattelld* are comicalities now, which I cannot conceive ever to have been serious; (2) because such contracted utterances are quite unnecessary for the metre, inasmuch as the lines are perfectly good to the ear even if the word *the* is fully, but softly, uttered, according to prose custom; and (3) because I find the same elision-mark used in the old texts in cases where it is utterly impossible that the total suppression of the *e* can have been meant. . . . On the whole, then, it is best to assume that strictly metrical effects are pretty permanent, that what was agreeable to the English metrical sense in former generations is agreeable now, and that, even in verse so old as Chaucer's, one

of the tests of the right metrical reading of any line is that it shall satisfy the present ear." * On the other hand, it may be observed that this question is not so much of metre pure and simple, as of conventional pronunciation under particular circumstances. Thomas especially emphasizes the fact that the five-stress verse, being introduced into English under French and Italian influences, was regarded as a strictly syllable-counting metre (see Milton's prefatory note to *Paradise Lost,* in which he mentions "fit quantity of syllables" as one of the essentials of the verse); hence that an extra syllable was to be avoided at all hazards. Professor Lewis agrees with this position, but holds that since "to our unsophisticated ears the process is often over-violent,"—that is, of reading the verse with complete elisions, modern readers are justified in reading it in the modern way. (*Principles of English Verse,* p. 33.) On this subject see further Mayor's *Chapters on English Metre,* and (with special reference to hypermetrical syllables in Shakspere's verse) Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar.*

In anapestic verse the opposite phenomenon—the substitution of an iambus or spondee—is extremely common. In this verse from Swinburne's *Death of Wagner,*—

"*Rose out* of the silence of things *unknown* of a presence a form, *a might*"

* So also Mr. Robert Bridges: "He intended that [the elided vowels] should not count in the scansion: yet though he printed 'Th' Almighty,' etc., it cannot be supposed that he wished it to be so pronounced." (*Milton's Prosody,* p. 50.)

both iambic and spondaic substitution are exemplified. This exchange of trisyllabic with dissyllabic feet is so constant in some metres that one can hardly do better than call them iambic-anapestic.* Browning's *Prospice,* in which there is frequent alternation of this sort,—

"When the snows begin, and the blasts denote,"—

is a case in point; so is Shelley's

"When the lamp is shattered
The light in the dust lies dead."

This free treatment of trisyllabic rhythm, in respect to the number of syllables, is, however, a dangerous liberty in the hands of the inexperienced; and the substitutions are satisfying to the ear only when the regular time-intervals are fairly well preserved, either by the obvious length of one or both syllables of the dissyllabic feet, or by the natural interposition of a pause to fill the place of the missing syllable. (Compare the remarks on syllable-length above, chapter iv, and on the English hexameter, page 284 below.)

Related to these alterations of individual feet are more profound alterations in which the whole metre of a poem seems to change, or to vacillate between one type and another. Perhaps the most common sort of example is found in metres which apparently strive to con-

Metres characteristically variable.

* As does Schipper, in *Englische Metrik.*

form to the dactylic type, but which (owing to the difficulty of maintainng this type with naturalness in English speech) tend repeatedly toward the anapestic. Thus Tennyson's *Rizpah,* which opens with a strongly marked dactylic cadence (the third syllable, to be sure, being omitted in the first two feet),—

"Wailing, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea,"—

presently gives us perfectly anapestic lines, such as:

"But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and they never would let him be good."

A similar contrast will be found between certain verses in *Maud:*

"Maud in the light of her youth and her grace;"
"Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and mean."

The reason, of course, why such variations do not offend the ear is that the dactylic verses are (as generally in English) catalectic, stopping—like the anapestic verses—on the stressed syllable, so that the change affects only the opening measures. This kind of flexibility in the trisyllabic form is beautifully exemplified in Arnold's *Forsaken Merman,* which, opening with a marked dactylic cadence,—

"Come, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below!"—

almost instantly retards the movement by the substitution of spondees and trochees:

> "Now the great winds shoreward blow,
> "Now the salt tides seaward flow!"—

later breaks out into the dactylic metre again,—

> "Come, dear children, come away down,"

and still later alters this to one completely anapestic:

> "She said, 'I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
> In the little gray church on the shore to-day.'"

Other poems forming interesting studies in mixed metres are Tennyson's *Revenge,* Mrs. Browning's *Cry of the Children,* and many of the lyrics in *Maud.* Variations of this sort, like other departures of art forms from their types and rules, are permitted to the masters, but are not to be imitated by the humbler workman; we perceive their beauty—as of something above law, justifying itself—when they are accomplished. Even in these cases it remains true, as Mr. Omond has penetratingly observed, that "variation is successful only when it brings into relief, not obscures, our perception of underlying uniformity." (*A Study of Metre,* p. 75.)

These variations, too, will commonly, in the work of the best writers of verse, be used with the deliberate purpose of emphasizing the passages in which they occur, or of making their cadences more

expressive of the thought. Professor Corson has put the matter in this way: "The normal tenor of the verse is presumed to represent the normal tenor of the feeling which produces it. And departures from that normal tenor represent, or should represent, variations in the normal tenor of the feeling. . . . A great poet is presumed to have metrical skill; and where ripples occur in the stream of his verse, they will generally be found to justify themselves as organic; i. e. they are a part of the expression." (*Primer of English Verse,* pp. 49, 50.) Illustrations of this principle may be found in the examples of inverted stress given on page 242, and of such additional changes in the regular metre as appear in the following passages:

Æsthetic value of metrical variety.

"The watery kingdom whose ambitious head
Spits in the face of heaven."
(Shakspere: *Merchant of Venice,* II, vii.)

"There whirled her white robe like a blossomed branch
Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I gave,
No more; but woman-vested as I was
Plunged: and the flood drew; yet I caught her; then
Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left
The weight of all the hopes of half the world,
Strove to buffet to land in vain."
(Tennyson: *The Princess,* iv.)

"A stump of oak half-dead
Clutched at the crag, and started thro' mid air
Bearing an eagle's nest: and thro' the tree
Rushed ever a rainy wind, and through the wind
Pierced ever a child's cry: and crag and tree
Scaling, Sir Lancelot from the perilous nest,
This ruby necklace thrice around her neck,
And all unscarred from beak or talon, brought
A maiden babe."
(Tennyson: *The Last Tournament.*)

"The sweep
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave."
(Tennyson: *Enoch Arden.*)

"Do you see this square old yellow book I toss
I' the air, and catch again, and twirl about
By the crumpled vellum covers; pure crude fact
Secreted from man's life when hearts beat hard,
And brains, high-blooded, ticked two centuries since?"
(Browning: *The Ring and the Book.*)

"That plant
Shall never wave its tangles lightly and softly
As a queen's languid and imperial arm."
(Browning: *Paracelsus.*)

"So he with difficulty and labour hard
Moved on, with difficulty and labour he."
(Milton: *Paradise Lost,* ii, 1021.)

In general, then, though it may not be possible to fit a definite explanation to each variation from the normal rhythm, and is certainly unwise to assume that such variations are always the result of

conscious deliberation on the part of the poet, yet it is safe to say that changes from the metrical type are successful and pleasing in so far as they give the impression of being the result of a flexible adaptation of the form to the substance of poetry, and are harsh and displeasing not so much from their merely metrical character as from the extent to which they give the impression of being due to the difficulty of crowding a certain number of syllables into a fixed metrical form. The same thing is true of those movements from one metre to another, which we have seen are characteristic of the whole extent of certain notable poems. If they appear to be the result of carelessness in drifting from one form to another, owing to certain natural tendencies of our speech, then—no matter how pleasing they may be in other respects—they must be thought to fall short of the perfection to which the poetical form forever aspires; but if, on the other hand, they are clearly the result of changes of emotion which seize upon both phrasing and metrical cadence and alter them for their own ends, they only exemplify the marvelous capacity of rhythm to give appropriate bodily form to the spirit of poetry.

For a suggestive study of the adaptation of metrical form to intellectual and emotional content, see Liddell's *Introduction to the Study of Poetry,* chaps. vi and xv.

Attempts to state definitely the limits to which alterations of a typical rhythm may be carried without

impairing its essential character, since they must rest on varying tastes and the varying practices of the poets, cannot prove very satisfactory. In general, anapestic metres admit of the greatest freedom in varying the number of syllables, and iambic metres of the greatest amount of freedom in varying the arrangements of stresses. Trochaic metres tend to be decidedly stable in both respects, but are very commonly catalectic (see below). Dactylic metres have never established themselves in English sufficiently to develop generally acceptable rules, though in practice they exhibit much of the freedom of anapestic metres. Early English verse showed great variety in the number of syllables (see the remarks on four-stress verse, on page 267 below); modern verse tends to great regularity in the number of syllables employed, with the exception of the free use of catalexis in trochaic measures and of feminine ending in iambic. Lyrical measures, in general, permit less variation from the typical metre than epic, and epic less than dramatic (see chapter ii). Unrimed five-stress iambic verse (commonly called simply "blank verse"), especially as used in the drama, shows more flexibility than any other familiar metre, and is the best place in which to study this question, especially from the standpoint of variations of stress cadence. Mr. A. J. Ellis discussed the limitations of metrical substitution in this metre, in an essay published in 1869, and reached the conclusion that in iambic pentameter "there must be a principal stress on the last syllable of the second and fourth measures; or of the first and fourth; or of the third and some other. If any one of these three conditions is satisfied, the verse, so far as stress is concerned, is complete." Mr. J. B. Mayor criticised this view (*Chapters on English Metre,*

chap. v), and developed for himself these laws of limitation: The limit of substitution (in iambic five-stress verse) of trochees, pyrrhics, and anapests is three feet out of the five; of spondees four out of five; of dactyls two (permissible only in the first and either the third or fourth foot). Yet he admitted the propriety of an iambic verse of Swinburne's in which the first four feet are anapests:

"Thou art older and colder of spirit and blood
than I."

By implication, Mayor also admits the propriety of an inversion (trochee) in the fifth foot; this however is an extremely bold license, and practically results in a wrenched accent at the close of the verse. (There are a few doubtful examples in Milton, about the pronunciation of which critics have disagreed; e. g.,

"Which of us who beholds the bright surface.")

This variation (inversion of stress) is always preferred in the first foot and immediately after the cesura. Its occurrence in both the first and the second foot is bold, but familiar in Milton,—as:

"Universal reproach far worse to bear;"
"Over fish of the sea and fowl of the air;"

and even in Tennyson rarely:

"Felt the light of her eyes into his life." *

While many rules might be formulated, on the basis of usage among the poets, they can amount to

* Such verses should probably be analyzed thus:

∧ — | ⏑ — | ⏑ ⏑ — | ⏑ — | ⏑ —

nothing more than a statement of what is actually tolerated; and the reader's ear must be the judge of what is pleasing. These general laws may be regarded as fundamental: (1) changes of cadence are admitted freely at the beginning of the verse, and sparingly near the end; and (2) the variations from the regular arrangements of stresses must not be so numerous, or of such a character, as to destroy the prevailing iambic movement of the verse. (For the most common principles governing alteration of cadence in other than iambic measures, see the remarks on the particular metres, below.) It is of course to be understood that more or less marked quantitative change (adjustment of the length of syllables and feet) is constantly going on, in the effort to compensate for alterations from the normal movement of the metre, in accordance with the principles set forth in chapter iv.

Truncation and extension of verses.

Certain alterations of the typical metre, other than those resulting from the substitution of one metrical foot for another, have still to be noticed: they involve the truncation or extension of the verse either at the beginning or the end. Initial truncation, familiar in English poetry of earlier periods, is a rare and rather bold license in modern verse, except for the omission of the first light syllable in anapestic metre (the substitution of an iambus). A typical example is found in the second of these lines from Milton's *Nativity*:

> "Apollo from his shrine
> Can no more divine."

Final truncation is said to make a verse *catalectic,* and is confined to trochaic and dactylic metres. An example is found in the second of these lines:

> "You shall certainly come to the fountain
> At length—to the Fountain of Tears."

In dactylic verse catalexis may involve the final light syllable only, as in—

> "This is a spray the bird clung to,"

or both light syllables, as in the second of these verses:

> "Take her up tenderly,
> Lift her with care."

It always, properly speaking, involves an instant of silence which is felt by the reader to form the completion of the rhythmical time.

An additional light syllable at the beginning of the verse is called *anacrusis,* and is equivalent to the single note which often begins a piece of music before the opening of the first measure. It is most familiar in iambic verse, where it may be described more properly as a substituted anapest, but has its characteristic effect (that of a note on the "upbeat") in trochaic or dactylic verse; as in the third of these lines from Shelley's *Skylark*:

> "What thou art we know not;
> What is most like thee?
> From rainbow clouds there flow not
> Drops so bright to see;"

or this from Hood's *Bridge of Sighs:*

"Alas for the rarity."

An additional light syllable at the end of the verse is a familiar variation in iambic and anapestic metres, both as a characteristic of entire poems and of particular verses. In "blank verse" (unrimed iambic five-stress) usage has commonly restricted this feminine ending to dramatic poetry; and in the drama (especially of the early seventeenth century) verses will be found in which *two* light syllables are added to the regular metre, forming twelve syllables in all, but not six feet. These terminations are called triple endings. An example is this verse from Fletcher's *Wild-Goose Chase:*

"And being free-born maids, we take a lib(erty."

The triple ending is also occasionally found in rimed verse, usually with a grotesque or comic effect, as in Byron's

"In small-eyed China's crockery-ware metrop(olis.'

It should be noticed that the terms "anacrusis' and "feminine ending" are sometimes a mere matter of printing, not of real rhythm. Thus in the lines

"White were the moorlands,
And frozen before her,"

the word "and," looked at from the point of view of the single verse in which it occurs, is an instance of anacrusis. In reality, however, it is the last syllable of the second dactyl of the preceding line, and should be written—for metrical purposes—in this way:

"White were the moorlands, and."

The true anacrusis steals for itself a moment of time from the natural pause between two verses. A full anapestic metre with feminine ending gives somewhat the effect of anacrusis, since a third light syllable must be crowded in between the stresses; as in Scott's Coronach (in *The Lady of the Lake*):

"He is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest."

It is more common, and more agreeable, to omit the first syllable of the initial anapest, when the preceding line has had a feminine ending,—that ending forming really the beginning of the succeeding anapest. So in O'Shaughnessy's *Fountain of Tears:*

"If you go over desert and mountain,
Far into the country of sorrow,
To-day and to-night and to-morrow,
And maybe for months and for years."

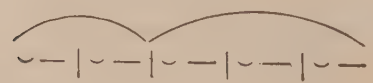
There remains one other element which must be included in a complete description of the individual verse: the pause. Pauses in verse are of two kinds: those which take the time of missing syllables, and correspond to rests in music; and those which have—as it were—to steal their time from that of the adjacent periods or syllables, and correspond to the phrase pauses in music. The first kind has been sufficiently discussed in chapter iv, and is of course exceptional. The second kind is of constant occurrence, and is commonly called the cesural pause or—more briefly—the *cesura*.

The pause.

The cesura has two origins, one rhythmical and the other rhetorical. From the rhythmical standpoint, it is due to the fact that a succession of five or more units of rhythm naturally divides itself—to the ear—into two smaller groups, which are themselves rhythmical units half way between the foot and the verse, and which we may call rhythmical cadences or phrases. Most naturally, a five-stress verse will fall into two parts with the division after either the second or third foot; as—

The cesura.

or



But it may divide (less naturally) in the middle of the third foot, after the fifth syllable. (Such a cesura, after an unstressed syllable, is called *feminine;* that following a stressed syllable, *masculine.*) These cadences may be further illustrated by such a simple syllabic division as this:

Te-tum te-tum te-tum, te-tum te-tum

or

Te-tum te-tum, te-tum te-tum te-tum,

or yet again—

Te-tum te-tum te, tum te-tum te-tum.

Any of these cesuras may be called *medial,* and the purely rhythmical tendency of every verse is toward a medial cesura. But the writer of verse may vary this, by arranging the rhetorical phrasing so that the cesura must come near the beginning or near the ending of the line.* In verse of six feet, the tend-

* For examples of this, see the passages from Tennyson quoted above, pages 249, 250. The following verses, showing cesuras varying from the middle of the first to the middle of the fifth foot, are all from Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* save the last, which is from Milton's *Paradise Lost.*

Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice.
Speak out; what is it thou hast heard, or seen?
Made answer: 'I had liefer twenty years.'
Then fell thick rain, plume droopt and mantle clung.
To doubt her fairness were to want an eye.
Were added mouths that gap'd, and eyes that ask'd
Most joy and most affiance, for I know.
And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.
And bush with frizzled hair implicit: last.

ency is very strongly toward a strictly medial cesura, after the third foot. A verse of seven feet divides naturally into fours and threes; and verses of eight feet break so insistently into two groups of four each that they are hardly recognizable as a separate metre.

The rhetorical origin of the cesura consists merely in the natural phrasing of sentences, which are separated by slight pauses such as may or may not be marked by punctuation. In verse these rhetorical pauses determine the metrical cesura, since the sense of the verse must not be disturbed by pauses for metrical purposes only. Where the pauses are strongly marked by grammatical or rhetorical gaps, the rhythmical cesura is made to appear more strongly; on the other hand, it may appear as a slight and almost imperceptible cutting of the verse, and may disappear altogether in verses where the sense is perfectly continuous. In illustration compare the gradation of pauses in the following verses:

But now farewell. I am going a long way.
Thrust in between; but Arac rode him down.
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.
To weep a loss that turns their lights to shade.
To the old solitary nothingness.

In illustration, further, of the difference between verse in which the cesura is medial and fairly constant and that in which it frequently varies, contrast the two following passages.

"'Tis ours the dignity they give to grace,
The first in valor, as the first in place:
That when with wond'ring eyes our martial bands
Behold our deeds transcending our commands,
Such, they may cry, deserve the sovereign state,
Whom those that envy dare not imitate! . . .
The life which others pay, let us bestow,
And give to fame what we to nature owe;
Brave tho' we fall ,and honor'd if we live,
Or let us glory gain, or glory give!"
(Pope: *Iliad,* Book xii.)

"The huge high presence, red as earth's first race,
Reared like a reed the might up of his mace,
And smote: but lightly Tristram swerved, and drove
Right in on him, whose void stroke only clove
Air, and fell wide, thundering athwart: and he
Sent forth a stormier cry than wind or sea
When midnight takes the tempest for her lord;
And all the glen's throat seemed as hell's that roared;
But high like heaven's light over hell shone Tristram's sword,
Falling, and bright as storm shows God's bare brand
Flashed, as it shore sheer off the huge right hand."
(Swinburne: *Tristram of Lyonesse,* viii.)

There is a final type of pause, different in some respects from either of those just discussed: namely, that which occurs at the end of the verse. It is like the cesura in forming the close of a rhythmical cadence, and is usually also like the cesura in having no place in the strictly rhythmical time. Yet in certain metres the

The end-pause.

pause at the end of the verse is increased to fill the time of a syllable missing from the full number expected.* Thus in trochaic catalectic metres, like

> "Souls of Poets dead and gone,
> What Elysium have ye known,"

the reader really perceives the moment of the missing syllable, and may be assumed to make a slightly longer pause than when the metre is complete, as in the next couplet:

> "Happy field or mossy cavern,
> Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern."

End-pauses, however, are commonly quite apart from the rhythmical time proper, and are imposed upon the rhythm so regularly that (like the last stress in the verse) they are frequently a matter of mental perception rather than of actual expression.

Now the rhetorical phrasing may coincide with this verse-phrasing (in other words, a rhetorical pause may occur at the place of the end-pause of the verse), as in the case of the cesura; but not

* A curious extension of this doctrine of the final pause as filling the time of silent rhythmical measures, is found in the theory of the late Coventry Patmore (see his "Prefatory Study on English Metrical Law," published with *Amelia* and other poems, 1878). According to this, the only standard or complete English metres are made up of eight, twelve, or sixteen syllables; all others, properly speaking, are catalectic, with a regular and definitely measurable pause at the end of each verse.

necessarily. When the poet desires, he may override the place of the final pause by continuous phrasing, as he may override the natural place of the cesura; and the metrical division of one verse from the next will remain unimpaired. Such a failure of the rhetorical phrasing to conform to the verse division is often called by the French term *enjambement*, or—as the term is sometimes paraphrased—*overflow;* while such verses are called "run-on," as opposed to the "end-stopped" verses which conclude with a distinct rhetorical pause. The contrast between verse forms characterized by these two types of line is well exemplified by the two passages cited above in illustration of the medial and variable cesura.

It should be noted that run-on lines do not usually conclude with a strongly proclitic word—that is, a word which is closely connected with the following word, like a preposition before a noun, or even an adjective before the noun with which it belongs. In such a passage as this from the *Winter's Tale*—

"This child was prisoner to the womb, and is
By law and process of great Nature thence
Freed and enfranchis'd, not a party to
The anger of the king, nor guilty of,
If any be, the trespass of the queen,"—*

the various degrees of *enjambement* are well illustrated. The conclusion of the first verse is called a "light

* II, ii, 59–63.

ending," those of the third and fourth verses "weak endings;" and their questionable metrical character consists not so much in the fact that they cannot be strongly stressed as that it is impossible to pause after them without violating the rhetoric of the lines. This does not, however, strictly apply to the ending "guilty of," since the following parenthetical clause ("if any be") makes natural a slight rhetorical pause before it. Such light and weak endings are especially characteristic of the verse of the late plays of Shakspere. The general avoidance of them in English poetry (as well as of verse divisions which separate adjectives from their nouns, and the like) means that the tendency to make the verse-pause coincide with at least a slight rhetorical pause is still very strong.* It should be noted that, even when there is little or no rhetorical pause indicated, a good reader may easily make a slight metrical pause at the end of the verse, without dropping the pitch of the voice and thus injuring the rhetorical expression. No matter how free be the use of run-on lines, poetry is not well read when a listener cannot distinguish it from prose.

We have now to consider briefly the most important types of metre, apart from the elements of the individual verse. And first the iambic metres, which overwhelmingly predominate in English poetry. Two reasons are com-

Iambic metres.

* For numerous violations of this principle, see Byron's *Cain*. A characteristic verse is—

> "Of seeming strength, but of inexplicable
> Shape."

monly suggested for this preference: (1) the fact that English sentences and clauses always tend to begin with an unstressed particle, thus making it unnatural to open a metrical phrase with a trochee or dactyl; and (2) the fact that English dissyllabic words—a large proportion of those in common use—are more commonly stressed on the first syllable than on the second, so that in iambic verse the line of division usually falls between the rhythmical units, whereas in trochaic verse it more frequently coincides with the division between words (see page 227 above); and the former arrangement is more pleasing to the ear. Neither of these reasons would explain the preference for iambic to anapestic metres, and this does not seem to be a preference natural to the language. In the earliest English verse trisyllabic metres—chiefly irregular—were familiar; and careless or popular verse, even when attempting the iambic form, always falls easily into trisyllabic feet. It appears that the restriction of the great body of our literary verse to dissyllabic feet, and hence to iambic metres, has been due to the influence of Latin, French, and Italian verse, and to the consequent establishment of a standard of correctness characterized by the continued alternation of stress and no-stress.

It might seem that the number of dissyllabic words stressed on the first syllable is quite balanced by the number of combinations like "my own," "the

tree," and the like, which take the stress in the reverse order. Similarly, Professor Lewis argues to the effect that the objection to trochaic verse cannot be due to anything like the second reason suggested above, on the ground that iambic verse is not disagreeable when it happens to be made up largely of dissyllables accented on the second syllable. But the example which he constructs in support of this statement would, for some readers, hardly bear it out. Mr. Lewis's conclusion is that "our low estimate of trochaic metres" is not to be ascribed to any peculiarity of the language, "but to an innate dislike for the trochaic rhythm itself." (*Principles of English Verse*, p. 104.)

Four-stress iambic verse.

Iambic verse is familiar in all lengths from two feet to seven (for specimens, see *English Verse*, pp. 26-44), but is most common in metres of four, five, and six stresses.* Each of these deserves some separate consideration. The four-stress riming couplet, the most important form made up of four-foot iambics, is found in abundant use from the poetry of Chaucer to that of Scott, although modern poets have usually preferred longer verses for continuous narrative poetry. It is a direct, fairly rapid metre, well adapted to simple narrative, where elaboration of thought or feeling and variety of cadence are not demanded; but its brevity unfits it for variety either in alteration of stress cadences or in the use of the

* On the limits of verse length, see two interesting letters of Mr. Omond's in *The Academy* for March 28 and April 25, 1908.

cesura; hence it is liable to monotony. It is never used without rime.

Scott defends his use of octosyllabic verse for narrative poetry in his Introduction to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel,* saying that it "appears so natural to our language that the very best of our poets have not been able to protract it into the verse properly called Heroic, without the use of epithets which are, to say the least, unnecessary. Thus it has often been remarked that, in the opening couplets of Pope's translation of the *Iliad,* there are two syllables forming a superfluous word in each line, as may be observed by attending to such words as are printed in italics.

> 'Achilles' wrath, to Greece the *direful* spring
> Of woes unnumbered, *heavenly* goddess, sing;
> That wrath which sent to Pluto's *gloomy* reign
> The souls of *mighty* chiefs in battle slain,
> Whose bones, unburied on the *desert* shore,
> Devouring dogs and *hungry* vultures tore.'"

In the English poetry of early periods there is an abundance of four-stress verse which one knows not whether to call iambic or anapestic; in fact it is neither, but can be described only in this way,—as being made up of four stressed syllables, placed at approximately equal time-intervals, and of an indefinite number of unstressed syllables—usually varying from three to eight—indeterminately placed. Professor Saintsbury, though in another connection, furnishes us with a good description of the effect of this (sometimes called "tumbling") verse, as "a kind of drunkard, staggering from tree to tree or other support, and caring only to get hold of the next without calculating . . . the number and meas-

ure of the steps which take him to it." (*Hist. of Eng. Prosody,* vol. i, p. 383.) With the structural element of alliteration, this verse is found in Anglo-Saxon poetry and in the so-called "long line" of *Piers Plowman* and other fourteenth century poems. Later (as in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*) it appears as rimed "tumbling verse;" again in the ballads, the mystery plays, and early sixteenth century comedies; and in popular or doggerel verse, down to our own time, this four-stress, non-syllable-counting verse may still be found. Schipper quotes a characteristic example from a ballad of Thackeray's:

"This Mary was pore and in misery once,
And she came to Mrs. Roney it's more than twelve monce.
She adn't got no bed, nor no dinner nor no tea,
And kind Mrs. Roney gave Mary all three."

(On this subject see *English Verse,* pp. 151-159.) Coleridge was really imitating this traditional freedom of our verse in *Christabel,* though he called it, curiously enough, "a new principle" to count "in each line the accents, not the syllables."

Five-stress iambic verse.

Five-stress verse predominates in iambic metre as overwhelmingly as does iambic over the other types of metrical rhythm. Various reasons have been suggested for the fact that it has thus proved itself our favorite and most serviceable measure. To some it seems to represent the natural length of an English clause or sentence, or the natural distance between breaths in reading. Others have emphasized the fact that its length (as compared with the verse of four

stresses) permits greater variety of cadence, both in alterations of stress and in the placing of the cesura; while the odd number of its feet tends to divide it into agreeably unequal cadences. Again, since this metre permits a variable number of full stresses (rather favoring four than five, in actual usage) and a consequent variable number of light syllables, yet approximates to a regular alternation of stress and no-stress, it combines to some degree the principal qualities of native English verse (which was originally based on four stresses and a variable number of light syllables) with those of the more exact syllable-counting verse of Latin, French and Italian. In all these suggestions there are doubtless elements of truth. Whatever the reason, from the time of Chaucer (who introduced it into English poetry) to the present, there has been scarcely a poet of the first importance who did not make this metre his chief form of expression; and were all the English verse written in other metres to be destroyed, the loss—especially if we except songs and similar lyrics—would be comparatively slight.

In usage the five-stress iambic metre appears in two great forms; as rimed, in couplets, and in continuous unrimed or "blank" verse. In general, the rimed form is characterized by greater regularity than the unrimed in number of syllables, changes of stress, and constancy of both medial pause and end-pause; and, partly at least for this reason, it has proved itself better fitted

Heroic couplet.

to express precise, epigrammatic, and characteristically intellectual ideas than the other. Thus Mr. Woodberry calls it "the best metrical form which intelligence, as distinct from poetical feeling, can employ." (*Makers of Literature,* p. 104.) To this rimed and fairly regular type the name "heroic couplet" is commonly given; the quotation from Pope's *Iliad,* on page 261 above, is a typical illustration of its character.

A looser use of the form appears in the couplets of Keats, Shelley, and Browning. Keats especially, in the *Endymion,* uses so many run-on lines that the single verse almost ceases to be the unit of the measure, and the rime is thrown into the obscure background. The following passage (Book ii, 317 ff.) is an extreme instance, not to be sure of run-on endings, but of a deliberate avoidance of coincidence between the rhetorical connection of verses and their pairing into couplets.

"Within my breast there lives a choking flame—
O let me cool't the zephyr-boughs among!
A homeward fever parches up my tongue—
O let me slake it at the running springs!
Upon my ear a noisy nothing rings—
O let me once more hear the linnet's note!
Before mine eyes thick films and shadows float—
O let me 'noint them with the heaven's light!
Dost thou now lave thy feet and ankles white?" etc.

On the other hand, for abundant run-on endings see the opening passage of Book i; also such passages of Shelley's *Epipsychidion,* Browning's *Sordello,* etc., as

are quoted in *English Verse*, pp. 208–213. Professor Lewis, in commenting on this free or romantic five-stress couplet, observes: "If you want the line-structure to be perpetually threatened with submergence by the flow of the rhythm, why should you hoist a flag on the end of every line? The rime in such verse would be really something of an annoyance; for either it would effectually distract your attention from the higher attractions of the rhythm, or else it would itself cease to be noticed except as an irregular intruder. One or the other of these effects the reader will probably discover in Keats's *Endymion*." (*Principles of Eng. Verse*, p. 67.) He goes on to point out that Keats himself was dissatisfied with the workmanship of *Endymion*, and later, in *Lamia*, wrote couplets which, though by no means so regular as those of Pope and his school, are truly of the heroic type in their structure.—It should perhaps be noted that a peculiar license of the heroic couplet, especially as practised by Dryden, is the occasional use of a third line (forming a "triplet") continuing the rime of a couplet, and very commonly containing six feet instead of five. An example may be found in the passage from Swinburne quoted on page 261.

Blank verse.

In the unrimed form this five-stress iambic metre is equally familiar, and, while theoretically of the same rhythmical character as the couplet, is in usage characterized by quite different qualities, in addition to its omission of rime. Most conspicuous of these is its larger use of varying cadences, in opposition to what we have seen to be characteristic of the couplet;—cadences due both to changes of stress and to the position

of the cesura.* The use of a large number of run-on lines, in the blank verse of most of the great poets who have developed the form, makes

* In respect to the regular number of syllables, although blank verse here also shows more freedom than the couplet metre, it is, by tradition and usage, surprisingly regular. See the remarks on page 240 above, where it is pointed out that this is due to the foreign influences which, for three centuries at least (from Chaucer to Milton), largely governed this type of metre. Bridges emphasizes this feature of the " heroic " verse so strongly as to put it in a class by itself, calling it syllabic verse, while other (particularly lyrical) metres are called accentual. " When reading Milton's or Chaucer's ten-syllable verse aloud, the occurrence of a line which is deficient in one of the ten syllables (and such lines occur in Chaucer) is extremely awkward both for hearer and reader, especially if the latter is not prepared for it. It cannot escape observation : and if a line occurs in which there are more than ten syllables, the ' trisyllabic foot ' is readily perceived ; so that of every line, as it is read, the hearer can say at once of how many syllables it was composed, whether of nine, ten, eleven, or twelve. But he will not observe a variety in the number of stresses in the same way ; whether the line have its full normal complement of five, or only four (as is very frequent), or only three, no awkwardness or interruption of rhythm will be perceived ; nor will the hearer be able to say readily at the close of any line how many true stresses it contained. This is syllabic verse. Of stressed verse exactly the contrary is true. . . Hearer and reader alike are indifferent as to the number of syllables which go to make the line ; nor, as each line is read, can they say how many syllables have gone to make it. But if a stress be omitted, they perceive the rhythm to be unsatisfactory." (*Milton's Prosody*, pp. 111, 112.) These observations are discriminating and absolutely true, and should be carefully noted by the student. Nevertheless, the difference is one of non-essential details, which have been wrought out by the accidents of usage, foreign influence, and tradition. Strictly speaking, the *rhythm* of an " heroic " verse is not impaired by varying the number of its syllables ; and it is only because, from its nature and usage, we are better able to mark the time-intervals in this metre without actually uttering the full number of stresses, that we allow a stress to be dropped here more willingly than in other types of verse.

the single verse less clearly the unit of the metre than is common in any other metrical form, and combines with the variable cesura to form long, flexible cadences, extending from one verse into another, for which the name "metrical paragraphs" has been suggested. Typical examples are these from Milton and Tennyson:

"Lowly reverent
Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground
With solemn adoration down they cast
Their crowns, inwove with amaranth and gold,—
Immortal amaranth, a flower which once
In Paradise, fast by the Tree of Life,
Began to bloom, but, soon for man's offence
To Heaven removed where first it grew, there grows
And flowers aloft, shading the Fount of Life,
And where the River of Bliss through midst of Heaven
Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her amber stream."
(*Paradise Lost,* iii, 349–359.)

"As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,
And shadowing down the champaign till it strikes
On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks, and splits,
And twists the grain with such a roar that Earth
Reels, and the herdsmen cry; for everything
Gave way before him: only Florian, he
That loved me closer than his own right eye,
Thrust in between; but Arac rode him down."
(*The Princess,* v.)

These metrical paragraphs may be said to fill somewhat the place of couplet or stanza in the

otherwise continuous flow of the metre. Finally, the place of rime is taken in some measure by an especially marked use of tone-color or verbal melody, which has been developed in blank verse rather more than in any other metre. Such a sonorously expressive group of verses as these from Keats, for example, would scarcely be looked for in any rimed or lyrical measure:

"Coeus, and Gyges, and Briareus,
Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyrion,
With many more, the brawniest in assault,
Were pent in regions of laborious breath;
Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep
Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their limbs
Lock'd up like veins of metal, crampt and screw'd;
Without a motion, save of their big hearts
Heaving in pain, and horribly convuls'd
With sanguine feverous boiling gurge of pulse."
(*Hyperion,* ii.)

It is in its fitness for continuous narrative poetry, whether in epic or dramatic form, that blank verse has proved its special value. The absence of rime and stanza gives it a continuity such as could not otherwise be maintained, while its flexible cadences preserve this continuity from monotony; and at the same time the absence of these obviously decorative elements fits it for the more serious and dignified types of poetry. In the drama especially it lends itself with singular flexibility to the representation of directly uttered human speech, seeming by its varied cadences and its

want of rime to come closer to reality than any of the lyrical metres, and yet maintaining a sustained rhythm adequate to carry the most lofty and intense emotional expression. Superficially there are no marked differences between the forms of this metre found in epic and in dramatic poetry, save the fact that usage reserves the feminine ending for the latter. But the careful reader may observe subtle differences in the cadences of the two forms, such as Symonds suggests when he says that dramatic blank verse shows a simple and progressive structure, epic blank verse a complex and stationary. "The one, if we may play upon a fancy, resembles music, and the other architecture." (*Blank Verse,* p. 58.)

On the qualities of this metre the student should consult J. A. Symonds's study called *Blank Verse,* the chapter on "Milton's Blank Verse" in Corson's *Primer of English Verse,* and chapter iii of Lewis's *Principles of English Verse.* Corson quotes an interesting passage from an account by Coleridge of some remarks of Wordsworth in a conversation with Klopstock: "My friend gave his definition and notion of harmonious verse, that it consisted (the English iambic blank verse above all) in the apt arrangement of pauses and cadences, and the sweep of whole paragraphs,

with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out,

and not in the even flow, much less in the prominence or antithetic vigor of single lines." (From the third of the "Satyrane Letters.") Symonds pays this

tribute to the metre: "English blank verse is perhaps more various and plastic than any other national metre. . . . Plato mentions a Greek musical instrument called *panharmonium,* which was adapted to express the different modes and systems of melodious utterance. This name might be applied to our blank verse; there is no harmony of sound, no dignity of movement, no swiftness, no subtlety of languid sweetness, no brevity, no force of emphasis, beyond its scope." (pp. 16, 17.)

Six-stress iambic verse.

Six-stress iambic metre is a familiar, but not a favorite form. Naturally dividing itself by the medial cesura into two equal parts, it soon palls upon the ear through the resulting monotony; and on the other hand the verse is rather too long to admit of much variation in the placing of the cesura without losing its essential character. Almost the only important English poems written in this metre are Drayton s *Polyolbion* and Browning's *Fifine at the Fair.* But as a variation from the five-stress iambic metre, both in the heroic couplet and in stanza forms, the alexandrine (as six-stress iambic verse is commonly called) does important service. Particularly to be noted is the part it plays in the forming of the so-called Spenserian stanza (for which see chapter vi). As used in that connection, the cesura is not infrequently found elsewhere than at the middle point of the verse, as in the line:

"Vile Poverty; and lastly, Death with Infamy."

Seven-stress iambic verse is rare in modern poetry, for reasons no doubt similar to those which have prevented the alexandrine from establishing itself as an agreeable measure. In this metre, to be sure, the cesura is not in the middle; the monotony of the cadences, therefore, is not so absolute as in the alexandrine. But on the other hand, owing to the greater length of the verse, the cesura is held even more insistently than in the alexandrine at its one natural point,—between the fourth and the fifth foot. The resulting effect is best observed in the single important English poem in this "septenary" metre,—Chapman's translation of Homer. Generally the metre has tended so constantly to break at the end of the fourth foot that it is most often found in the disguised form of a stanza made up of four stresses alternating with three:*

Seven-stress iambic verse.

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us
He made and loveth all."

Anapestic verse stands next to iambic in the extent and importance of its use in English poetry. As has already appeared, the earliest periods of English verse showed a constant tendency toward the use of trisyllabic feet, and we have also seen that anapestic rhythm easily

Anapestic metres.

* The "common metre" of the hymn-books.

intrudes into that which sets out to be iambic. Since the tendency of the reader is almost always to bring a given number of anapestic feet into the same time as the same number of iambic feet, there is a natural hurrying over of the light syllables, and a consequent rapidity in the characteristic movement of this type of metre. For this reason it is usually preferred either for themes of a light character, or for those which call for a more flowing, galloping, or lilting cadence than the steadier alternating beats of the iambic form. Characteristic examples are Byron's *Destruction of Sennacherib* ("The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,"), Shelley's *Cloud,* Moore's song beginning "Believe me, if all those endearing young charms," and O'Shaughnessy's *Fountain of Tears.** Ana-

* Cf. these lines in particular:

"And it flows and it flows, with a motion
So gentle and loving and listless,
And murmurs a tune so resistless
To him who hath suffered, and hears."

Compare also Swinburne's remark on the seven-stress anapestic verse of Aristophanes: "this resonant and triumphant metre, which goes ringing at full gallop as of horses who

'dance as 'twere to the music
Their own hoofs make.'" (*Studies in Song*, p. 68.)

Swinburne's translation runs:

"Come on then, ye dwellers by nature in darkness, and like to the leaves' generations,
That are little of might, that are moulded of mire, unenduring and shadowlike nations," etc.

pestic metres are found in all lengths from two-stress to eight; but, owing to the increased number of syllables to the foot, verses of three or four stresses adapt themselves best to the natural phrasing of poetry (being most nearly equivalent to the five-stress iambic, in their capacity for carrying thought), and are more common than the longer measures. Another reason for this preference for the shorter anapestic measures is the fact that they tolerate variation of cadence (with the exception of the substituted iambus) less than the iambic;* so that a long anapestic line is likely to attract undue attention to its form either from a displeasing effort to secure variety in adapting itself flexibly to the sentence it carries, or, on the other hand, from the almost breathless continuity of its regular flow. Of the former type are the long anapestic lines of Browning's *Saul* (such as

"He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest shall
stand the most weak");

of the latter type the still longer anapestic lines of Swinburne in numerous metres of six, seven and eight stresses. (See examples in *English Verse*, pp. 43, 48.)

* This is because of (1) the necessity of maintaining the principal stresses, when they occur on only one syllable in three, and (2) the similar necessity of maintaining the shortness of the unstressed syllables, in order that they may not drag the verse and keep the stresses too far apart.

On the disadvantages, despite their technical brilliancy, of the longer anapestic metres, Professor Lewis comments interestingly in *Principles of English Verse,* pp. 116-118. "No one can fully appreciate at the same time both the rhythm and the sense of *Saul;* we either relish the verse with only a vague sense of the meaning, or else become absorbed in the meaning with only a vague sense of the verse. A similar effect is produced by much of Swinburne's poetry; for though Swinburne is the greatest living master of these forms of verse, he has achieved his mastery largely by sacrificing clearness and precision of style to sensuous charm of sound. It is safe to predict that any one who reads the opening lines of *Hesperia* for the first time will find them rhythmically charming, but will have little more understanding of them than of the beautiful nonsense verses of Lear or Lewis Carroll."

Trochaic metres.

Trochaic metres, for reasons already discussed, have never established themselves largely in English verse; and we have also seen that they are commonly made catalectic, so as to end on the stressed syllable, like the iambic metres. In other words, most English poems in trochaic form could as well be called iambic with initial truncation. (This is particularly obvious in Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso,* where the rhythm changes freely back and forth between verses of seven and eight syllables, and one knows not whether to call the type iambic, with frequent initial truncation, or trochaic, with frequent anacrusis.) Except for this variable character of the

final foot of the metre, trochaic verse is commonly the most regular of all the types, admitting few variations save the weakening of an occasional full stress to a secondary stress. Where no stress can easily be found, as in the second foot of

"Sailed into the fiery sunset,"

there is an effect as of a wavering or weakened metrical structure. In longer verses, "variety in uniformity" is sometimes secured by the alternation of full-stress and half-stress, in the "paeonic" manner, as in Browning's

"On the solitary pastures where our sheep."

Trochaic feet are most used in four-stress verse, which, when complete or acatalectic, gives the metre of *Hiawatha,* and, without the final syllable, the metre of a good part of Milton's *L'Allegro* and a number of the minor poems of Keats (*Fancy, Robin Hood, Mermaid Tavern,* etc.).* Of long trochaic verses the most notable instances are Tennyson's *Locksley Hall,* Browning's *La Saisiaz,* and Poe's *Raven,* all of eight stresses, and Tennyson's *To Virgil,* which reaches the very unusual length

* In praise of this seven-syllable metre, see some remarks of Lamb in his essay on "The Poetry of George Wither." "What longer measure," he exclaims, "can go beyond the majesty of this!"

of nine stresses (most of the lines breaking into fours and fives):

"Thou that seest Universal Nature moved by Universal Mind."

Five-stress trochaics are rare: a conspicuous exception is Browning's *One Word More,* made still more remarkable by the omission of rime.

Dactylic metres.

The fourth of the types of metre, the dactylic, is least used and—one must suppose—least practicable in English verse; the numerous attempts at it which break into anapestic rhythm are a striking illustration of the preference of our language or our ears for the "rising" types of metre. Yet it may be found (commonly, like trochaic verse, with final truncation or catalexis) in lengths varying from two-stress to six-stress, in such well-known poems as Hood's *Bridge of Sighs,* Browning's *Cavalier Tunes,* and (with a strong admixture of anapestic cadences) Tennyson's *Northern Farmer.* In five-stress and seven-stress verses it is practically unused; an almost unique example of its appearance in eight-stress form may be found in Longfellow's *Golden Legend* (iv). But the importance of the type depends chiefly upon its use in verses of six feet, in poems designed to imitate the rhythm of the dactylic hexameter in Greek and Latin. Of these poems the leading examples are Longfellow's *Evangeline,* Clough's *Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich,*

and Kingsley's *Andromeda* (for numerous other experiments, see references in *English Verse,* pp. 340-356).

The classical hexameter is a metre consisting of six feet, of which the last is either a spondee or a trochee, and the other five are either dactyls or spondees, with dactyls predominating (a spondee in the fifth foot being unusual). The attempts to imitate this metre in English may be divided into two classes: those in which the effort has been made to preserve the regular *quantitative* principles governing the syllables and feet of classical prosody, with more or less conformity at the same time to English stress-rhythm, and those in which the effort has been simply to develop an analogous metre made up chiefly of dactyls in the transferred (accentual) sense of the term. The result has been a great variety of metrical effects, and a great variety of critical opinions regarding them. With the question whether it is either possible or desirable to reproduce in English poetry the real rhythm of Greek or Latin hexameter, we have nothing to do. It is sufficient for our purposes to note that those who have been chiefly concerned to imitate purely quantitative verse in English have commonly paid too little attention to the principles of English verse in respect to regularity in the number of syllables and the arrangements of their stresses; while those who have neglected the element

The English hexameter.

of quantity altogether have tended to produce a kind of tumbling measure in which six stresses appear, but often without sufficiently equal time-intervals between them. The privilege of using either dissyllabic or trisyllabic feet is a very dangerous one, unless the writer has a sufficiently good ear to observe the values of the time-units of the rhythm. In such a verse as this, for example,—

"Birds of | passage | sailed through the | leaden | air,
from the | ice-bound,"—

the first two and the fourth feet are neither dactyls nor spondees, and provide no equivalence of length for the missing third syllable supposed to be typical of the metre. In *Evangeline,* from which the verse is taken, many others will be found of the same character; and still others, in abundance, whose opening foot fails to strike at once a strong stress in the manner properly characteristic of the metre, as—

"On the | morrow to | meet in the | church, where
his | Majesty's | mandate,"

which by itself would be read as a five-stress anapestic verse with feminine ending. Kingsley's *Andromeda,* on the other hand, represents a constant attempt to maintain the time equivalence of dissyllabic substitutes for the dactyl,—in other words,

shows many genuinely long syllables in such feet, as in the lines—

"Whirled in the white-linked dance with the gold-crowned Hours and the Graces,
Hand within hand, while clear piped Phoebe, queen of the woodlands."

Clearly, like the long anapestic forms, the metre has a certain charm of its own, and a flexibility which in careful hands may yield varying and beautiful cadences. For the reasons just pointed out, however, its licenses make it dangerously easy and loose in the hands of the unskilful; and that it is not representative of natural English rhythmical taste seems to be indicated by the fact that, notwithstanding numerous experiments in the form, no poem of the first importance has yet been written to justify its serious use.

Discussions of the English dactylic hexameter, in addition to the account given in *English Verse,* will be found in Matthew Arnold's lectures *On Translating Homer,* Southey's Preface to *The Vision of Judgment,* James Spedding's *Reviews and Discussions,* John Stuart Blackie's *Horae Hellenicae,* Robert Bridges's *Milton's Prosody,* Mayor's *Chapters on English Metre,* and Omond's *Study of Metre* (Appendix). In Swinburne's *Studies in Song,* commenting on his imitation of the classical anapestic heptameter in a translation of a chorus from *The Birds* of Aristophanes, the poet observes that the rhythm of the original is "almost exactly reproducible in a language to

which all variations and combinations of anapestic, iambic, or trochaic metre are as natural and pliable as all dactylic and spondaic forms of verse are unnatural and abhorrent." (p. 68.) On the other hand, Matthew Arnold's hopeful looking for "continued attempts at perfecting and employing this rhythm" finds support in the recent remarks of Mr. Omond: "A great poet is wanted, who will treat this metre as Milton treated that of *Paradise Lost,* discovering its harmonies, revealing its potentialities. Prophecy is futile, but many signs point to a development on the lines indicated. Triple-time metre increases in favour; lines of six periods are exceedingly common. It looks as if this might become as usual a length in triple verse, as the five-period line in duple. That, however, is guesswork. . . . Of one thing, however, we may be sure. If this or any other measure is developed, it will be along the lines which it shares with more familiar forms. Laws which govern all English measures will apply to this also."

In 1900 there was privately published a pamphlet by Mr. Prentiss Cummings of Boston, discussing the hexameter verse of Homer, Vergil, and English poets, and proposing a new theory, of which the principal feature is the rule that this metre should (and always does, when successful) divide the verse into halves which balance perfectly in the placing of the main rhetorical stresses or places of emphasis. Thus if principally stressed syllables occur in the second and third feet, others should occur in the fifth and sixth; if in the first and third, others in the fourth and sixth. The point is illustrated by a comparison between two translations of a well-known Greek distich, the first of which violates Mr. Cummings's rule, the second of which observes it:

"Even the potter is jealous of potter, and craftsman of craftsman:
Even the beggar to beggar is grudging, and poet to poet."

"Even the potter of potter is jealous, and craftsman of craftsman;
Even the beggar to beggar is grudging, and poet to poet."

A modified form of the dactylic hexameter is found in a few poems whose rhythm is in part imitative of the so-called "elegiac" verse of classical prosody. In this form hexameters of the usual type were used in alternation with others in which the light syllables were omitted in the third and sixth feet (doubly catalectic, one might call them).* This alternation is easily reproduced in English, the third and sixth feet of the shorter lines being filled by single, strongly stressed syllables, followed by a pause. An admirable example is to be found in Mr. William Watson's *Hymn to the Sea,*—

"Lover whose vehement kisses on lips irresponsive are squandered,
Lover that wooest in vain Earth's imperturbable heart."

* The technical name for the shorter line is "pentameter;" but it is a meaningless term, due to a primitive mistaken scansion of the metre as made up of two dactyls, a spondee, and two anapests. In reality the six feet of the verse are as obvious as in the full hexameter.

Other pseudo-classical metres.

Certain other metres of classical poetry have been imitated in English, in forms which it is difficult —and not at all necessary—to describe in the usual terms of English verse. The best specimens of these may be found in the works of Tennyson, which include imitations of the different alcaic metres (see in chapter vi, on the alcaic stanza), of the Phalæcian hendecasyllabic metre (composed of a spondee, a dactyl, and three trochees, as in

"Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem"),

and, in *Boadicea,* of the extraordinary "galliambic" metre of Catullus:

"Yelled and shrieked between her daughters o'er a
wild confederacy."

This last metre has also been imitated by George Meredith in a poem called *Phaëthon.* Other classical imitations will be noticed in connection with stanzas, in the next chapter, and are described in *English Verse,* pp. 331-340. On Swinburne's *Choriambics,* see page 235 above. In general, recent English poetry is characterized by great freedom and ingenuity in the invention and variation of metrical forms, and there is no reason to doubt that the present century may show as remarkable a development in this direction as the last. But whatever the new forms of metre, and whether they be imitated from

those of other languages or devised *de novo* for our own, they must conform to the metrical laws which we have been studying, speaking the rhythmical language of the English race, or they will remain mere curiosities—not real interpreters of our feelings and thoughts.

CHAPTER VI.

RIME AND STANZA FORMS.

THUS far, in considering the external form of poetry, we have confined ourselves to the single verse and the phenomena which it presents. It remains to examine the relation of verses to one another as they are found grouped in larger units of verse form.

The chief means of linking verses together in these larger units is Rime. In modern English usage, verses are said to rime when there is similarity (commonly to the point of identity) between the sounds of the vowels bearing the last principal stress and all (whether vowel or consonant sounds) that follow them. Such answering or echoing sounds, which may occur by chance at any point, and which may be deliberately used for giving a certain melodic color to the poetic form (see on assonance and the like, in chapter iv above), become peculiarly conspicuous when they occur at the emphatic close of neighboring verses, and serve very readily to link such verses together for the ear. The functions of

Nature and functions of rime.

rime may therefore be summarized as three: (1) the giving of pleasure by the correspondence of similar sounds; (2) the emphasizing of the concluding cadence of the verse; and (3) the linking of separate verses into larger metrical units.

When single syllables only are involved in rime, the rime is called *masculine;* when both a stressed and an unstressed syllable are involved, as in "nation" and "creation," the rime is called *feminine* or *double;* when a stressed syllable and two unstressed syllables are involved, as in "fortunate" and "importunate," it is called *triple.* Obviously the rimes in trochaic and dactylic metres are regularly feminine; in the more familiar iambic and anapestic forms, and in trochaic and dactylic catalectic, feminine rimes are exceptional, and give characteristic variety and emphasis to the verse. This may be appreciated by comparing the effect of such a sonnet as the twentieth of Shakspere's (beginning "A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted"), whose rimes are altogether feminine, with the more familiar cadences of those based on masculine rime. Again, the charm of such a stanza as this from Swinburne is certainly due in part to the cadences of the feminine rimes:

Masculine and feminine rime.

"So hath it been, so be it,
For who shall live and flee it?
But look that no man see it
Or hear it unaware;

Lest all who love and choose him
See Love, and so refuse him;
For all who find him lose him;
But all have found him fair."
(*Before Dawn.*)

In the verse of Chaucer, it should be noticed, and of other early poets who wrote while final *-e,* both written and pronounced, was still characteristic of most inflected English words, feminine rime is far more common than in later verse; but the cadence of such terminations was lighter than that of ordinary feminine rimes, and closely reproduced effects which are now familiar only in Italian and French verse.

Triple rime.

The variety and emphasis of feminine rime are still further increased in the case of triple rime, which is so conspicuous as to attract attention to itself or to the words in which it occurs. Like a remarkably brilliant bit of color in a gown or a picture, it is likely to give either pleasure or offense,—to produce an effect either of special beauty or of grotesqueness. The most familiar examples of triple rime in English poetry are designed to set off humorous, satiric, or arabesque expression; as in Byron's famous couplet,—

"But—oh! ye lords of ladies intellectual,
Inform us truly, have they not hen-pecked you all?"

and Browning's—

> "His forehead chapleted green with wreathy hop,
> Sunburned all over like an Æthiop."

On the other hand, there are many familiar examples of its use for the emphasis of wholly serious emotional expression,—the most notable, perhaps, being Hood's *Bridge of Sighs* (see in *English Verse*, p. 130). Other interesting examples are Lanier's *Ballad of Trees and the Master*, with the curious threefold triple rime—

> "But the olives they were not blind to Him,
> The little gray leaves were kind to Him,
> The thorn-tree had a mind to Him,"

and Kipling's *The Miracles:*

> "I sent a message to my dear—
> A thousand leagues and more to her—
> The dumb sea-levels thrilled to hear,
> And Lost Atlantis bore to her."

Internal rime.

Another method by which the emphasis and coloring of rime are magnified is by the use of *internal* rime in connection with the usual end-rime. This ordinarily means that the final syllable of the verse rimes with that just preceding the medial cesura, either in addition to, or (more commonly) as a substitute for, its rime with

the last syllable of another verse. Thus in *The Ancient Mariner:*

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow streamed off free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea."

If the verse be of considerable length, internal rime will tend to break it into two shorter verses, and when—as is sometimes the case—the syllable at the cesura rimes with the syllable at the cesura of the succeeding verse (the end-syllables also riming as usual), the result will be something very like the "common metre" quatrain, riming alternately.* Yet there is a marked difference between a given number of syllables viewed as forming a single verse, with internal rime, and the same syllables viewed as forming two shorter verses. No one would write the stanza just quoted from *The Ancient Mariner* in six verses instead of four; and the familiar song in *The Princess* would be badly changed if printed in this fashion:

"The splendor falls
On castle walls,
And snowy summits old in story;

* So in Poe's *Lenore*:

"Come, let the burial rite be read—the funeral song be sung;
An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so young."

The long light shakes
Across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory."

What, then, is the difference between this stanza and that written by Tennyson? Chiefly that the words "falls" and "shakes" are not intended by the poet to sound as clearly as "walls" and "lakes;" much less are they intended to emphasize the conclusion of a strong cadence, like the words "story" and "glory." This he indicates by writing:

"The splendor falls on castle walls."

Such internal rimes, then, sound more faintly to the ear than end-rimes, like a separate and subtle melody heard underneath the rime-scheme of the stanza. Their faintness and subtlety are still further increased when they rime only with other internal rimes, as in Poe's *Lenore*

("Let the bell toll! a saintly soul floats on the Stygian river")

and Swinburne's *Armada:*

"England, queen of the waves whose green inviolate girdle enrings thee round,
Mother fair as the morning, where is now the place of thy foemen found?
Still the sea that salutes us free proclaims them stricken, acclaims thee crowned." *

* Compare also the remarkable internal rimes throughout Shelley's *Cloud.*

A rime is weakened not only when it occurs at any other place than that bearing the closing rhythmical stress of the verse, but when —even though in this position—it falls on a syllable which can receive only a secondary stress; and much variety and beauty are secured (particularly in poetry of the late Victorian period) by the use of these half-stressed rimes. They soften the jingle of the answering sounds, like the damper pedal on a piano, and subtly vary the concluding cadence of the verse. Characteristic examples are such rimes as "free" and "liberty," "caress" and "childishness," "souls" and "aureoles," "things" and "vanishings." * They are particularly likely to be found in the sonnet, not only because, with the heavy demands which that form makes upon one or two rime-sounds, such weaker rimes prove convenient to the writer and agreeable to the reader, but also because they seem well suited to the subdued and reflective manner characteristic of the sonnet.

Half-stressed rime.

Yet another weakened type of rime is *imperfect* rime, in which either the vowel or the consonant sounds in the riming syllables are not identical. This is rather a license allowed the writer of verse than a variation deliberately chosen by him, and since it commonly sug-

Imperfect rime.

* Rime may even occur on syllables which are scarcely capable of taking even a secondary accent; thus Rossetti rimes "wing-feathers" with "hers" in *Willow-wood* and "love-lily" with "me" in *Love-Lily*. This, however, is a mannerism, and inevitably results in either the wrenching of word accent or the complete obscuration of the rime.

gests imperfection—the failure to attain completely that which is aimed at,—imperfect rime is and must be viewed with some suspicion. Yet it is abundantly found in the verse of the best poets; and the peculiar difficulties which beset the writer of verse in an uninflected language, where there are few similar grammatical terminations to make rime easy, furnish some justification for admitting it. Some would even claim that imperfect rime forms a pleasing relief to the monotony or jingle of otherwise perfectly rimed verse. The student should note that what appear to be imperfect rimes in the verse of earlier periods (as late certainly as the eighteenth century) are often due to a change in the pronunciation of one of the words in question; and in cases of this sort where pairs of words originally rimed, modern usage, familiar with the imperfect rime now resulting from their frequent collocation, seems to accept conventionally their continued appearance in verse. In such cases, too, the words are usually spelled alike, owing to their originally similar pronunciation; and these "rimes to the eye" are, quite illogically, tolerated more readily than those where neither spelling nor pronunciation supports their use in pairs. Words like "love" and "prove," "broad" and "load," "earth" and "hearth," "one" and "alone," are examples in point. Other imperfect rimes commonly tolerated are "ever" and "river," "heaven" and "given," or "heaven" and "even,"—instances

which seem to be due to the lack of any adequate number of perfect rimes for certain words exceedingly common in poetry. In general, imperfect rime between the consonants following the stressed vowel is far rarer than rimes in which the vowels are not identical; yet Wordsworth ventured to rime "robin" with "sobbing," and in Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott* "river" rimes with "mirror." In couplets, where the answering rime is particularly prompt and emphatic, imperfect rime is less tolerable than in many stanza forms; yet, on the other hand, long sustained poems usually admit such variations more readily than brief lyrics, for which we expect a more perfect finish.

Identical rime.

Finally, it should be noted that modern English usage (unlike that of earlier periods, and unlike that of French poetry) requires ordinarily that the consonants immediately preceding the riming vowel shall be unlike; in other words, that the syllables involved in the rime shall not be wholly identical. Numerous exceptions will, however, be found, in cases where the syllables form different words with distinct meanings,—especially if they are separated by intervening lines. Thus Shelley, in the *Adonais,* rimes "wilderness" with "loveliness" in one stanza and with "nakedness" in another.*

* This sort of rime is called *rime riche* by the French, and in French poetry is preferred as the only complete expression of the riming art.

No adequate study of the phenomena of rime in English verse has yet been written. Interesting brief discussions will be found in Corson's *Primer of English Verse* (chap. ii), and Lewis's *Principles of English Verse* (chap. vi). The best account of the irregular and imperfect rimes used by English poets is to be found in two articles by Professor A. G. Newcomer, in *The Nation* for Jan. 26 and Feb. 2, 1899. In the *Contemporary Review* for Nov. 1894, William Larminie writes in advocacy of the recognition of mere assonance, or vowel-rime, as a legitimate variation from the use of full end-rime, pleading that attention to the latter is thinning out the substance of modern poetry, through unique emphasis upon the demands of form. On the other hand, the most appreciative accounts of rime will be found in French criticism,—a circumstance due to the proportionately large part which rime plays in French poetry. See, for example, Dorchain's *L'Art des Vers* and Guyau's *Problèmes de l'Esthétique Contemporaine.* From Dorchain this passage is of special interest: "Do you know why rime is an aid to the poet? Hold fast this answer: *it is because it is a discipline,* and every discipline is at once a source of strength and of freedom. When have you felt your steps to be most free and strong? Was it when you were rambling idly among the trees or the rocks, without any other law than your caprice? No, it was when you were once on the high-road chosen for your march, when a flourish of trumpets that sounded in your ear, or a merry song that was rising to your lips, had suddenly—as by magic—lightened, strengthened, and liberated your pace by making it rhythmical." (p. 177.) Guyau analyzes rime more specifically: "It is well known that in language each vowel has a particular *timbre,* which

is nothing more than the chord formed by its fundamental note and the elemental sounds called harmonics [or over-tones]. All language is therefore a succession of chords, but in prose they succeed one another irregularly, in verse they recur in equal numbers and at equal intervals. . . . Rime completes the harmony by the chords on which the rhythmical cadence rests; . . . this regular echo, by itself, is not lacking in charm. But further, since the vowels have each its own *timbre*, the rimed vowels will have something of the varied *timbre* of instruments; some, like long *a*,* resemble the double-bass; others, like *i*, have the acuteness of the clarinet or the flute; each verse can be recognized by the quality of its final syllable; some, so to speak, are accompanied by one instrument, others by another, and we experience a pleasure, as we perceive the different qualities in the stanza, similar to that of the musician as he distinguishes the different instruments in the orchestra taking up one after another a melodic phrase." (pp. 193, 194.)

Rime forming couplet and terza rima.

Turning now to the application of rime to the organization of English verse forms, we find it first of all as accessory to continuous narrative verse. Most commonly this use appears in the forming of the decasyllabic couplet and—less notably—the octosyllabic couplet; both these forms have been sufficiently considered in chapter v. A third type of rimed continuous verse, borrowed from the Italian and rare in English, is the so-called *terza rima,* in which the rimes run

* It is of course the French vowel-sounds which are to be understood here.

aba, bcb, cdc, and so on; in other words, the verse is divided into groups of three, of which each is linked by the rime of its first and third lines to the second line of the preceding group. The chief examples in English of this form are in translations of Dante, imitating the metre of the original, such as Cayley's. Other specimens may be found in Milton's paraphrase of the Second Psalm, Shelley's unfinished *Triumph of Life,* Morris's *Defence of Guenevere,* and Browning's *The Statue and the Bust.* In all save the last, the metre is five-stress iambic; Browning uses the *terza rima* uniquely with four-stress iambic-anapestic verse.

The stanza.

In the next place, rime is found organizing verse into stanza (or strophe) forms, the largest commonly recognizable units of verse structure. The stanza is based not so much on rhythmical elements as on the rhetorical or musical grouping of a number of verses of like rhythmical character: that is, a number of verses which may be regarded as forming a short paragraph in the thought-structure of the poem, or which—on the other hand—conform to a single melody completely uttered. In succeeding stanzas new rhetorical units take on the same form, and (in the case of song) adapt themselves to the same melody. Normally, then, all the stanzas of a poem are identical in the number, the length, the metre, and the rime-scheme of the corresponding verses. In short stanzas a highly unified rhythmical movement may be repre-

sented, which falls into a few obviously related cadences; as, for example, that of the "common metre" stanza:

> "Te-tum, te-tum, te-tum, te-tum,
> Te-tum, te-tum, te-tum,
> Te-tum, te-tum, te-tum, te-tum,
> Te-tum, te-tum, te-tum."

In longer stanzas the cadences and verse groups are developed with much elaboration, and are oftentimes so extended or intricate that the ear can only with difficulty grasp them as single units of verse form.

Rime is for English verse the great organizing element of the stanza. Theoretically, stanzas may exist without rime; and there are a few notable English poems in which rimeless stanzas or strophes are found,— Collins's *Ode to Evening*, for example, and Tennyson's *Tears, Idle Tears*. But these are so exceptional that one may say, in general, that English stanzas are based on rime. Their form is determined, and their variations are made possible, by the four elements suggested in the previous paragraph: the metre employed (iambic, anapestic, etc.), the number of verses in the stanza, the length of the verses (which may be all of equal length, or be varied by the use of catalexis, feminine ending, and the addition and subtraction of entire feet), and the arrangement of rimes.

Rime in the stanza.

It will be found that the pleasurableness and effectiveness of the resultant form also depend largely upon four considerations. First, the rhythmical cadence resulting from the grouping of verses of particular lengths. Thus, in the stanza instanced in the previous paragraph, the response of the three-stress verse to the four-stress that opens the stanza is a universally obvious and pleasing cadence. The response of a three-stress verse to one of five stresses, while not so obvious or common, is equally pleasing:

Sources of stanza effects.

"But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home."

A familiar stanza devised by Swinburne finds its peculiar charm in the change from three-stress anapestic verse to a concluding verse of only two stresses:

"Let the wind take the green and the gray leaf
Cast forth without fruit upon air;
Take rose-leaf and vine-leaf and bay-leaf
Blown loose from the hair."
(Dedication to *Poems and Ballads.*)

The alternate use of masculine and feminine endings (as in the specimen just quoted), or—in trochaic verse—of catalectic and acatalectic lines, without change in the number of stresses, produces similar effects. Secondly, the pleasurableness of a stanza form will depend upon the simplicity or complexity of the rime scheme. When the rime sounds

answer each other promptly, or with regular alternation, the resulting effect is much simpler, and is likely to be more popular, than in forms where the answering sound is delayed, or occurs at such a distance as to make the hearer listen for it with conscious effort. English usage, far more (for example) than French and Italian, has commonly preferred the simpler rime schemes, and avoided those making heavy demands upon the hearer's sense of form. Thirdly, and more generally, the effectiveness of a stanza form depends upon its relation to the principle of *unity in variety*. The very existence of the form implies both these elements: a single harmonic combination of verses, which can be grasped by the sensuous intelligence, and a variety in the character and arrangement of the sounds on which the combination is based. In the simpler and more primitive types of stanza, the element of unity is emphasized and that of variety neglected; in many artificial stanzas, the opposite is true; in the more successful artistic stanzas, notably (for example) the "Spenserian," both elements may be said to be equally recognized. Finally, the effect of the stanza will depend on the extent to which its metrical structure corresponds or conflicts with its rhetorical structure. Thus in the *terza rima* (which, although not strictly a stanza form, admirably illustrates the point in question), the Italian poets commonly make each tercet represent a rhetorical unit, with a fairly important

pause at the end; while most of the English poets who have made use of the form have run over the sense from tercet to tercet in such a way as to produce an entirely different effect. The same thing is notably exemplified, at the other extreme of elaboration, in the sonnet.

Stanzas as poetically expressive.

In general one must suppose that here, as elsewhere, the most successful forms will be those which are most truly expressive of the poetic material of which they are the medium; and the best poets will commonly be found to make their stanzas, like their rhythms, serve the inner purposes of their art. It is easy enough, with the almost infinite variety of possible combinations of metres and rimes, to devise original types of stanza or strophe; but a stanza form which is merely intricate, impressing the reader as new and ingenious, but without a pervading unity in its variety, and without any clearly apparent reason for its existence in connection with the poem in which it stands,—this is a work of jugglery rather than of art. On the other hand, as a medium of expression, particularly in lyrical verse, a delicately devised stanza often serves beautifully to emphasize the rhetorical structure of the poem and to modulate the poet's emotion, after the manner of a melody which surprises by its freshness yet seems natural the moment it has been heard.*

* Among English lyrical poets perhaps none exhibits so much ingenuity and versatility in the devising of stanza forms, and gives

Classification of stanzas.

Turning now to the particular stanza forms which appear in English poetry, we shall find it impossible to classify them by any accurate scheme, since the various elements on which their form depends present cross-systems of analysis. If we should group them according to the number and length of verses, the rime scheme would break through these groupings; so also if we approached them from another side. Yet in general we may pass from the shorter and simpler stanzas to those longer and more elaborate, by no means attempting to study all possible types or even all those in actual use.

a a.

The shortest possible stanza is one of two verses, riming *aa;* * and this is actually found, used distinctively from the continuous couplets of heroic verse. Examples are Browning's *The Boy and the Angel,* in four-stress verse, and Tennyson's *Locksley Hall,* in eight-stress.

evidence of so much concern for adapting them to the content and emotion of the poems concerned, as George Herbert. See the remarks of Professor George H. Palmer on Herbert's stanzas, in the Introduction to his edition of Herbert's Works.

* This method of descriptive notation explains itself, the verses riming together being indicated by the same letter. If it is desired at the same time to indicate the length of the verses, a superscribed figure showing the number of stresses or feet is commonly used; thus a quatrain in "common metre" (four-stress and three-stress lines, riming alternately) is represented by the formula $a^4b^3a^4b^3$.

Tercets, or stanzas of three verses, commonly riming *aaa,* are somewhat more familiar. This stanza is found in Herrick's lines *To Julia* ("Whenas in silks my Julia goes"), Longfellow's *Maidenhood,* Clough's *Sic Itur,* and Tennyson's *The Two Voices,* all in four-stress verse. Kipling's *Mulholland's Contract* shows the same form in verse of seven stresses.

a a a.

The quatrain, or stanza of four verses, is by far the most familiar throughout English poetry, and illustrates in its various forms most of the principles of variation applicable to stanzas of the briefer sort. Theoretically, the quatrain might appear in any of these rime schemes: *aaaa, aaab, aaba, abaa, aabb, abab, abba, abbb, aabc, abac, abbc, abca, abcb, abcc.* The first of these is an exceedingly simple form, in which unity is attained at the expense of variety; it is found occasionally, but very rarely. At the other extreme are such forms as *abca* and *abcc,* in which variety is secured at the expense of unity; the closing verse of such a stanza would rime, to be sure, with one of the preceding verses, yet in each case a pair of verses (*bc* in the first, *ab* in the second) would be left without any linking element. Stanzas of this type are not used. The form *abcb* would seem at first thought to be open to the same objection, yet the ear is satisfied fairly well by the alternate *b* rime, and passes over the omission of rimes in the other verses

Quatrains.

a a a a.

a b c b.

without serious complaint. This quatrain is distinguished only subtly from a long couplet, and it may easily be written so:

"Ye flowery banks o' bonnie Doon, how can ye bloom sae fair!
How can ye chant, ye little birds, and I sae fu' o' care!"

It is a familiar type of quatrain in short verses, particularly of alternate four- and three-stress, as in the example just quoted; familiar especially in songs, ballads, and other popular types of poetry. Literary poetry tends to avoid it because of the sense of imperfect finish resulting from the two rimeless verses. The corresponding quatrain with complete alternative rime, *abab,* may be called the standard quatrain form in English poetry. It is equally familiar in the form made up of alternate four- and three-stress verses (as in Wordsworth's *Lucy Gray*), in four-stress verses throughout (as in Cowper's *Shrubbery*), and in five-stress throughout (as in Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*). The last of these types is sometimes called the heroic quatrain.

a b a b.

Returning to our possible forms, the second on the list, *aaab,* while a practicable stanza, is not a true quatrain, since it inevitably divides itself into a tercet and a coda or refrain. Used in this way it is familiar, as in Cowper's *My*

a a a b.

Mary. The same thing would be true of the opposite type, *abbb*, which is practically unknown. The form *aabb* is a simple combination of two couplets, into which verse will fall naturally enough; it appears in some important poems, such as Shelley's *Sensitive Plant* (all in four-stress verses) and Marvell's Ode on *Cromwell's Return* (with a combination of four- and three-stress). The fact that it is by no means a favorite stanza may be sufficiently explained by its comparative lack of unity: there is nothing to link together the first and second parts.

aabb.

The type *abba* is the result of a deliberate effort to modify the more familiar *abab* quatrain, for the sake of securing a different effect in the expressiveness of the stanza. In the latter—the familiar—type, the natural alternation of the rimes results in a somewhat obvious jingle, which, although it is by no means destructive of seriousness, is likely to impair the effectiveness of a long-continued serious poem. By holding the *a* rimes further apart, so that the second answers the first—as one might say—more softly, a remarkable change is produced, which especially goes to form a stanza better fitted for the continuous flow of a long poem. The great example of its use in this way is Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. Here, and generally, it is used with four-stress verses; but there are occasional examples of the same

abba.

stanza with five-stress verse (for example, Milton's paraphrase of the Sixth Psalm). The same rime scheme is occasionally used with some variation of verse length; as in Frederick Tennyson's *Dream of Autumn,* where three five-stress verses are followed by one of three stresses, and in Mrs. Browning's *A Dead Rose,* where the reverse scheme is used, the shorter verse opening the stanza.

The quatrain of the *aaba* type is another deliberately artistic variation from the more familiar type; a variation which, although it is open to the objection that one verse is left without any rime-link with the others of the stanza, nevertheless possesses a peculiar unity from the haunting insistence of the one *a* rime. The ear expects a second *b* sound at the conclusion of the stanza, but instead is brought back to the rime with which it opened, with a resulting tone-color which often suggests Fitzgerald's lines:

a a b a.

"But evermore
Came back by that same door wherein I went."

It is in this translation, by Fitzgerald, of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam, that the stanza is most familiar. Another notable example (also in five-stress verse) is Swinburne's *Laus Veneris.* A different stanza, in four-stress verses, yet of the same rime scheme, was used by Tennyson in the lines *To Maurice:*

"For groves of pine on either hand,
To break the blast of winter, stand;
And further on, the hoary Channel
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand."

The similar rime-scheme, *abaa,* is not in use as a stanza form, doubtless because the ear insists more strenuously on rime at the close of the second and fourth verses of the quatrain than at the close of the first and third; hence in this case the second *b* rime would be more strongly expected, and the repeated rime tend more to be vexatious, than in the *aaba* arrangement. For a similar reason, the remaining forms in our list of possible quatrains, *aabc, abac,* and *abbc,* are wholly unknown in actual usage; the absence of any rime for the concluding cadence of the stanza would leave it with a disagreeable effect of accidental formlessness.

Stanzas of five verses are most naturally formed by the extension of one of the quatrain types. Thus, adding to the *aabb* form a third *b* rime, we have the singularly haunting $^{a\,a\,b\,b\,b,}$ tonal scheme of Rossetti's stanza in *Rose Mary:*

"Mary mine that art Mary's rose,
Come in to me from the garden-close.
The sun sinks fast with the rising dew,
And we marked not how the faint moon grew;
But the hidden stars are calling you."

Expanding the *abcb* form by the insertion of another *c* rime, we have the stanza of Wordsworth's *Peter Bell* (*abccb*); or, with another *a* rime, the form *abcab* (used in Christina Rossetti's *Summer is Ended,* the last two lines a foot shorter than the others). Expanding the *abab* stanza similarly, we have either *abaab* (as in Rossetti's *Sunset Wings*), *ababb* (as in Waller's *Go, lovely Rose*), or the familiar *ababa* (as in Browning's *Two in the Campagna*). A peculiar type of the *ababb* stanza is that in which the fifth verse is a long coda to the quatrain; thus in Shelley's *Skylark* a six-stress iambic verse is added to a quatrain of three-stress trochaic verses, and in Swinburne's *Hertha* a long coda of six anapests is added to a quatrain of two-stress verses of the same character. The *abba* quatrain, expanded, may give the form *abbaa* (found in Frederick Tennyson's *Glory of Nature*), *abbba* (in Christina Rossetti's *The Bourne*), or *abbab* (used by Mr. Wm. B. Yeats in *Rose of the World,* with the last verse shorter than the others).

a b c c b.
a b c a b.

a b a a b
a b a b b
a b a b a.

a b b a a
a b b b a
a b b a b.

Stanzas of six verses are either tripartite in structure, dividing into three pairs of verses, or bipartite, dividing between the third and fourth or between the fourth and fifth verses. Simplest of the former type, but rarely used, is the combination of three couplets, *aabbcc*, found in Browning's *Confessional.* More familiar is the continued alternate rime

a a b b c c
a b a b a b.

scheme, *ababab,* found in Byron's *She Walks in Beauty.* Similar to this, but without the *a* rimes, is the form *abcbdb,* used in Rossetti's *Blessed Damosel.* Of the two-part type the simplest form is that made up of a quatrain with added couplet, *ababcc,* used in the Dirge in *Cymbeline,* Wordsworth's *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud,* and Arnold's *Morality;* or, with a different quatrain as basis, the form *abbacc,* used by Mr. Robert Bridges in *Thou didst Delight my Eyes.* Or, again, the couplet may precede the quatrain, as in the *aabcbc* stanzas of O'Shaughnessy's *Greater Memory.* Another, and important, variety of the bipartite six-line stanza is that formed by adding to each of two couplets a coda, or "tail rime," usually of shorter metrical length than the couplet verses. This gives the familiar scheme *aabccb,* commonly called the "tail-rime" stanza or *rime couée;* a characteristic example is the bridal song from *The Two Noble Kinsmen,* by Shakspere and Fletcher. What may be called an inversion of this form occurs when the coda verses are longer than the others, instead of shorter; such is the stanza of Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra.* In Thomas Buchanan Read's *Drifting* the same long coda verses appear, but riming with the couplets to which they are attached. Another interesting variation is a stanza based on only two rimes, with short coda verses forming the

a b c b d b
a b a b c c.

a b b a c c
a a b c b c.

Tail-rime stanzas.

fourth and sixth, instead of the third and sixth, of the stanza; the resulting form, *aaabab,* is familiar in many of the poems of Burns:

> "Wee, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,
> O what a panic's in thy breastie!
> Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
> Wi' bickering brattle!
> I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee
> Wi' murd'ring pattle!"

More complex than any of these six-line stanzas are the forms *abbaab,* used by Browning in *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came,* and *abccba,* used by Rossetti in *The Mirror.*

Stanzas of seven lines are essentially intricate in structure, and comparatively rare. The most important type is the old "rime royal" stanza, *ababbcc,* found in a good part of Chaucer's poetry, and in Shakspere's *Rape of Lucrece;* it is almost invariably used with five-stress verse. Theoretically this stanza may be looked at as an expansion of the *ababcc* type, more highly unified by the additional verse. This additional verse (the fifth) is connected with the preceding quatrain by its rime; but rhetorically it is more likely to be connected with the following couplet; hence it serves in a subtle way to bind the first part of the stanza and the conclusion closely together. As used by Chaucer it is one of the most pleasing of English stanzas, but modern English poets have rather strangely avoided

Rime royal.

it; among the few later examples are certain of the tales in Morris's *Earthly Paradise.* A variant of the rime royal type is found in the form *ababacc,* used also by Morris in *Iceland First Seen.* Other seven-line stanzas are formed by expanding the familiar six-line stanza of a quatrain plus a couplet; thus we find the form *ababcca* in Browning's *Guardian Angel,* and *ababccb* in Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night.* Adding a rime to the *aabbcc* stanza, we have the *aabbcca* of Rossetti's *Soothsay.* More intricate are the forms *abcabca,* used by Swinburne in *An Appeal,* and *aabcbcc,* used by O'Shaughnessy in *St. John Baptist.* In *Love's Nocturn* Rossetti uses a seven-line stanza characterized by the presence of only two rime sounds: *ababbab,* with the sixth verse shorter than the others. Finally, there are occasional examples of the tail-rime stanza with an added longer verse in either the first or second group, riming *aaabaab* or *aabaaab.*

Other seven-line stanzas.

Stanzas of eight verses are exceedingly numerous and varied. Simplest of all is the continuous alternate rime, *abababab,* rarely used because of the obvious fact that the unity of the scheme is maintained at the expense of variety. On the other hand, the alternate-rimed stanza of six verses, with a couplet added, forms the familiar *ottava rima* form, *abababcc,* in which the principal division of the stanza lies between the sixth and seventh verses;

Ottava rima.

it is the concluding couplet which gives the form its characteristic effect. Notable examples are Keats's *Isabella* and Byron's *Don Juan;* in the latter poem this stanza was brilliantly adapted to the purposes of satire and burlesque. Of equal or greater importance is the group of eight-line stanzas formed by the combination of two quatrains. If the quatrains are left with separate rime-schemes, the unity of the stanza is based on rhetorical rather than metrical structure; types of this character are the stanzas riming *abcbdefe* (found in Shelley's *Indian Serenade*), *ababcdcd* (used in his *One word is too often profaned*), *ababccdd* (used by Wordsworth in *The Solitary Reaper* and—with a concluding verse longer than the others—the *Ode to Duty*), *ababcddc* (used by Owen Meredith in the *Indian Love Song*), and *abbacdcd* (used by William Watson in the *Ode in May*). On the other hand, the two quatrains may be so linked by rime as to increase the stanzaic unity. Of this character are the stanzas riming *ababbcbc* (used by Byron in *Farewell, if ever Fondest Prayer*), *abcbdbeb* (used by Christina Rossetti in *Mother Country*), *aabcddbc* (used by Mr. Watson in *Columbus*), *ababcccb* (used by Swinburne in *The Garden of Proserpine*), and *abbcddad* (used by O'Shaughnessy in *The Fountain of Tears*).*

Other eight-line stanzas.

* In the remarkable poem called *A Song of Palms* O'Shaughnessy made use of no less than four other distinct eight-line stanzas, in all of which the second quatrain is linked to the first by the *b* rime: *aabbccbb*, *abaaccbb*, *aababcbc*, and *aabbccbc*.

Among eight-line stanzas we have also that of the tail-rime type, riming *aaabcccb;* it appears in Drayton's famous *Agincourt* ode, and in Wordsworth's *Daisy*. Many other eight-line stanzas are formed by the combinations of verses of various length; a notable example is the Hymn in Milton's *Nativity Ode,* riming *aabccbdd,* with verses of three, four, five and six stresses. Finally, we may note an interesting stanza of eight verses in which the rime scheme is in part dependent on internal rimes: that of Mr. Kipling's *True Romance.* The form may be represented by the scheme $^{a}_{a}b^{c}_{c}b^{d}_{d}e^{f}_{f}e$:

"Thy face is far from this our war,
Our call and counter-cry,
I shall not find Thee quick and kind,
Nor know Thee till I die:
Enough for me in dreams to see
And touch Thy garment's hem:
Thy feet have trod so near to God
I may not follow them."

The normal English stanza thus appears to be most naturally formed of four, six, or eight verses; and when we pass beyond this point to longer forms, we enter the field where individual artistic taste has ingeniously developed and elaborated the simpler and briefer stanzas for particular purposes. A partial exception to this is found in the nine-line stanza invented by Spenser, now always called "Spenserian," which, although apparently devised by

The Spenserian stanza.

purely individual art for a particular work, has nevertheless been so freely and so beautifully used by later poets as to have become one of the standard strophic forms of English poetry. This stanza, riming *ababbcbcc,* is best regarded as an expansion of the eight-line stanza of the *ababbcbc* type; the first eight verses being always in five-stress metre, the additional verse in six-stress. Thus the concluding verse is linked by the rime to the preceding verses, yet stands by itself, with its individual lingering cadence, as a kind of conclusion and recapitulation of the entire stanza. The Spenserian stanza has always been used most characteristically for elaborated and sustained poetical narration and description, in poems where attention is directed not merely to the theme of the whole but to the beauty of detail in the several parts; or, as one critic has phrased it, poems characterized by a "lingering, loving, particularizing mood." Outside of Spenser, important examples of its use are in Keats's *Eve of St. Agnes,* Byron's *Childe Harold,* Shelley's *Adonais,* and Tennyson's *Lotos Eaters.*

Ten-line stanzas.

Longer and more elaborate stanzas cannot be discussed here with any thoroughness. Where successful, they will be found to depend on the principles already exemplified. Interesting instances of forms of ten verses are found in the stanza of Chatterton's *Ælla,* riming *ababbcbcdd,* with a concluding alexandrine in the manner of the Spenserian stanza; the stanza of

Gray's *Ode on Eton College,* riming *ababccdeed;* the stanza of Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale,* riming *ababcdecde,* with the eighth verse shorter than the others; the stanza of Arnold's *Scholar-Gypsy* and *Thyrsis,* riming *abcbcadeed,* with the sixth verse shorter than the others; and varieties of the tail-rime scheme in the stanzas of Rossetti's *Burden of Nineveh,* riming *aaaabccccb,* and Mr. Watson's *Autumn,* riming *abbabcddcd.* Certain other long and elaborate strophic forms will be considered in connection with the ode.

A group of stanzas has been reserved, for convenience, to a separate paragraph; namely, those whose structure is based not merely on the grouping and linking of coordinate verses, but on the use of a refrain. These take us back to the early connection between verse and song, and are among the most purely lyrical stanza forms.* The simplest type of refrain stanza is such an one as this, from a primitive song-lyric:

Refrain stanzas.

"Blow, northern wind,
Send thou my sweeting!
Blow, northern wind,
Blow! blow! blow!"

Here the refrain in some measure takes the place of rime; so also, though with the additional use of rime in certain verses of the stanza, in such refrain forms as Burns's *Birks of Aberfeldy* (whose scheme

* From the historical standpoint, the tail-rime stanzas probably belong in this group.

is *aaaR*) and the more elaborate type seen in his *Duncan Gray* (*aRaRbbbR*). Similar types are used also in more purely literary poems, where the insistent recurrence of a simple theme nevertheless resembles the method of the song lyric; examples are Cowper's *My Mary* (*aaaR*), Tennyson's *Oriana* (*aRaRaaRaR*), Kingsley's *Three Fishers* (*ababccR*), and the concluding chorus to Morris's *Love is Enough* (*ababbR*). Again, a single word repeated at the end of one or more verses may act as a sort of extension of the refrain of the stanza; as in Carey's *Sally in our Alley,* where the word "Sally" is repeated at the end of the sixth verse of each stanza, riming with the full refrain which forms the seventh and eighth verses. In Burns's *John Anderson,* the unrimed word "John" is an approximation to the full refrain, "John Anderson, my jo." In both these cases the refrain itself rimes with other verses in the stanza, and so very commonly in modern poetry. An example, further removed from the song or ballad type than any of the others, is Shelley's lyric:

"O World! O Life! O Time!
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more—oh, never more!"*

* Of these refrain stanzas, as developed by artificial elaboration, such French forms as the rondeau and ballade furnish notable examples. They are reserved for separate consideration (see below, pp. 333–337).

On the other hand, some modern writers have imitated the unriming, parenthetical, and partially irrelevant refrains of the old ballad type; a notable example is Rossetti's *Sister Helen*.

Modern stanza varieties.

The stanza forms thus far considered have depended for their characteristic effects chiefly upon variation of rime scheme, and secondarily on variation in length of verses; most of them being in iambic metres. In recent periods much variety has been further secured by combining with the strictly stanzaic elements alterations of metrical character, particularly in the trochaic and anapestic forms. Adding these variations to the possibilities of rime arrangement, the opportunities for fresh experimentation, agreeable in an age of romantic individuality and love of novelty, become limitless. New and interesting stanzas, like that of Swinburne's great Chorus in *Atalanta* ("When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces"), and Kipling's *Last Chantey*, will be found to be pleasing in large part because of the combination of rhythmical with more strictly stanzaic elements. In view of the great number and interest of these experiments in new types, it will perhaps surprise the student of the subject to see how much of the best work, even in recent poetry, is still done in comparatively simple forms. Despite repeated periods of experimentation, under foreign influences and otherwise, English taste has re-

mained fairly faithful to the simpler types of verse structure.

Pseudo-classical stanzas.

A particular class of stanzas, requiring brief mention, is that representing the effort to introduce classical measures into English verse. In a previous chapter we have seen how this appears in the use of certain metres. It is especially the lyrical stanzas familiar in the poetry of Horace that have been imitated in like manner, and most of the experiments in this group are found in works of early poets, notably Sir Philip Sidney and Thomas Campion. Only one of these stanza types has in any way established itself in English poetry: the so-called "sapphic" stanza, made up of three verses of eleven syllables followed by one of five syllables. Swinburne's *Sapphics* are an admirable example:

> "Ah the singing, ah the delight, the passion!
> All the Loves wept, listening; sick with anguish,
> Stood the crowned nine Muses about Apollo;
> Fear was upon them."

Of perhaps more importance, yet unique in modern English poetry, are the "alcaic" stanzas of Tennyson on *Milton:*

> "O mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies,
> O skill'd to sing of time or eternity,
> God-gifted organ-voice of England,
> Milton, a name to resound for ages." *

* The partially rimed stanza of Tennyson's quoted above, p. 311, is thought to be composed in imitation of this same alcaic type.

Other interesting experiments of the same sort may be found in Mr. Robinson Ellis's translation of Catullus in the metrical forms of the original. Such imitators of classical measures usually discard the element of rime, as not being used in Greek and Roman poetry; and some of them try also to reproduce the strictly quantitative measures of those languages.

There is no adequate treatment of the stanza in English verse, outside the learned material accumulated by Schipper in his *Englische Metrik*. The most suggestive study of the function of stanza forms in adapting the expression to the theme and poetic mood, will be found in Corson's *Primer of English Verse*, chapters vi-x. Professor Corson analyzes the stanza of Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (see page 309 above), and emphasizes the difference between this and the more familiar *abab* stanza. "By the rhyme-scheme of the quatrain, the terminal rhyme-emphasis is reduced, the second and third verses being the most closely braced by the rhyme. The stanza is thus admirably adapted to that sweet continuity of flow, free from abrupt checks, demanded by the spiritualized sorrow which bears it along. Alternate rhyme would have wrought an entire change in the tone of the poem." (pp. 70,71.) On the other hand, he discusses the stanza of *The Palace of Art*, an *abab* quatrain of which the first and third verses are in five-stress metre, the second in four-stress, and the fourth in three-stress. "In the stanza before us the poet has secured an extra enforcement of the final verse by making it shorter by two feet than the first and third, and shorter by

one foot than the second. Its exceptional length alone enforces it; and being shorter, the rhyme-emphasis is increased, because the rhyming words are brought closer together. . . . The subtle adaptation of the stanza to a pictorial purpose must be distinctly felt by every susceptible reader." (pp. 80, 81.) While of the *aaa* tercets of *The Two Voices* Professor Corson observes: "What the poet in the *In Memoriam* aimed to avoid, in *The Two Voices* he aimed to secure, namely, a close emphasized stanza. The poem consists, in great part, of a succession of short, epigrammatic arguments, pro and con, to which the stanza is well adapted. . . . The terminal rhyme-emphasis, to which the shortness of the verses also contributes, is accordingly strong, and imparts a very distinct individuality to each and every stanza." (p. 78.) In the chapter on "The Spenserian Stanza," Professor Corson quotes the suggestive remarks of Lowell, in his Essay on Spenser, on the effect of the alexandrine at the close of the stanza: "In the alexandrine, the melody of one stanza seems forever longing and feeling forward after that which is to follow. There is no ebb and flow in his metre more than on the shores of the Adriatic, but wave follows wave with equable gainings and recessions, the one sliding back in fluent music to be mingled with and carried forward by the next. In all this there is soothingness, indeed, but not slumberous monotony; for Spenser was no mere metrist, but a great composer. By the variety of his pauses—now at the close of the first or second foot, now of the third, and again of the fourth—he gives spirit and energy to a measure whose tendency is certainly to become languorous." In Professor Lewis's *Principles of English Verse* there is a brief but helpful discussion of the stanza, pp. 77-84. This observation

is worthy of special note: "In all stanza-forms the rime plays its part in one or the other of these two ways, and often in both: that is, it displays the stanzaic structure, or it obscures it, or it partly displays and partly obscures it. In general, simple display is more popular; for in stanzas the sing-song effect is rather agreeable than otherwise." (p. 81.) In the same connection occurs an interesting comparison of the quatrain forms *aabb, abab,* and *abba.*

The sonnet.

We now turn to the consideration of certain types of verse structure analogous to the stanza, but more elaborate and complete; and first the Sonnet, which is a highly elaborated stanza forming in itself the body of an entire and perfectly unified poem. Of Italian origin one of its two principal types exhibits that complexity of rime structure which we have seen to be more characteristic of the taste of the Latin than of the English race; the other represents the modification of the form in the direction of greater simplicity. In the poetry of the age of Shakspere, both forms are found equally important, with a tendency toward a preference for the second or English type. In modern poetry the first or Italian type largely prevails, yet with great variation of form. In general, wherever used, the sonnet is a form marked by conscious literary art, not serving for the more popular purposes of poetry, and, while broadly lyrical in character, it is usually more closely related to the reflective than to the song type of lyric.*

* See the remarks on the sonnet in chapter ii, p. 70 above.

The strict or Italian sonnet form consists of fourteen verses in five-stress iambic metre, separated into two distinct rime-groups between the eighth and the ninth verses. The first eight verses, called the octave, rime *abbaabba;* the last six, called the sestet, are variously arranged with either two or three additional rimes, the most familiar schemes being *cdecde, cdcdcd, cdedce,* and *cddcee.* English poets, in general, have exercised considerable freedom in their treatment of the rime scheme of the sonnet; Wordsworth, for example, frequently introduced a third rime into the octave, in the form *abbaacca.* The tendency of recent poetry is toward greater regularity in this particular.

The strict Italian type.

In the stricter type of sonnet there is a marked rhetorical pause at the end of the octave, the division representing a twofold expression of the single thought which forms the unifying basis of the form. Some, indeed, would demand that the entire structural scheme of the form correspond to that of the content. Thus Mr. Tomlinson, in his work on *The Sonnet,* observes that the "one idea, mood, sentiment, or proposition" which it expresses, "must be introduced . . . in the first quatrain, and so far explained in the second that this may end in a full point; while the office of the first tercet is to prepare the leading idea of the quatrains for the conclusion, which conclusion is to be perfectly

Bipartite character.

carried out in the second tercet." Few English poets, however, have carried out this conception of the form carefully, and many even neglect the pause between octave and sestet. Some of the finest sonnets in the language, like Milton's *On his Blindness,* and Wordsworth's *The world is too much with us,* while bipartite in rhetorical structure, yet divide not between octave and sestet but in the middle of a verse. In other cases, as in a large proportion of Mrs. Browning's sonnets, there is no twofold structure, and only such unity as any short poem might show. Yet, apart from matters of purely poetical merit, those sonnets may well be regarded as most successful whose form bodies forth the real character of their content. From this standpoint, the Italian type is especially well fitted for the expression of a thought presented first in narrative form, then in more abstract comment (as Arnold's *East London*); or, in the form of a simile between two objects or situations (as Longfellow's first sonnet on the *Divina Commedia*); or, from the standpoint of two different moods (as Rossetti's *Lovesight*); or, exemplified in two coördinate concrete expressions (as in Keats's *Grasshopper and Cricket*). The last named sonnet is well worthy of detailed study for its perfect adaptation of form to inner structure. The theme is stated at the opening of both octave and sestet, and developed separately in two particular applications:

"The poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead:
That is the Grasshopper's; he takes the lead
In summer luxury; he has never done
With his delights, for, when tired out with fun,
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never:
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills."

The English type.

The other type of sonnet, called sometimes the English, sometimes the Surrey or the Shakspere form (from the earliest and the most distinguished of English poets who used it), is of the same length as the Italian type, but, instead of dividing into octave and sestet, falls into three quatrains and a couplet; the usual rime scheme being *ababcdcdefefgg*. The resulting effect is different in two respects: first, the rime arrangement is more obvious, and more popular in tone, being more readily followed by the ear; second, the structure is more directly progressive, the rime scheme being developed climactically and closing with the epigrammatic, summarizing couplet. Both these characteristics are well illustrated in the familiar 73rd sonnet of Shakspere:

"That time of year thou may'st in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang;
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest;
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by:
—This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long."

Structurally considered, this is obviously a totally different mode of expression from that represented in the sonnets of the other type. While more truly English in feeling than the other, it has less that is really characteristic, and maintains its separate existence as a form of art less insistently; it has therefore been comparatively little used in modern poetry.

The Spenserian type.

The sonnets of Spenser, called the *Amoretti*, show a variation from the English type which Spenser evidently devised with a view to linking the three quatrains more closely by the rime; the scheme is *ababbcbccdcdee*. This form has rarely been used by other poets.

Sources of sonnet effects.

The success and pleasurableness of the sonnet form seem to be dependent upon two elements: the complexity of the rime scheme (this applying only to the Italian type), and the fixed length of the whole poem. The former, as we have seen, is opposed to the taste and traditions of English poetry; and it is perhaps for this reason that the sonnet always remains, as was said at the outset, a consciously elaborated form, appealing chiefly to the reader of cultivated taste and thoughtful temper. Notwithstanding that most of the great English poets of modern times have written sonnets, perhaps only Rossetti (who was of Italian stock) found in the formally correct sonnet the natural expression of his lyrical impulse, —the form *par excellence* for uttering himself to his fellows. On the other hand, the intense unity of the form, limited as it is to fourteen verses, while it presents grave difficulties in the way of poetic workmanship, yet shows a dignity of manner and an effect of completeness and finish which—even if not spontaneous—are pleasing to the artistic sense. It is precisely the contrast which it presents with the limitless liberty of romantic art, as exhibited in abundant variety of metrical, stanzaic, and rhetorical structure, which gives the restraint of the sonnet its chief charm.*

* See the remarks to the same effect, and the reference to Wordsworth's sonnet on the sonnet, in chapter ii, p. 71 above.

Discussions of the sonnet will be found in the work of Tomlinson's already cited,—*The Sonnet, its Origin, Structure, and Place in Poetry;* in Leigh Hunt's essay introductory to *The Book of the Sonnet;* in the introductions to sonnet anthologies edited by William Sharp, Samuel Waddington, and Hall Caine (see bibliographical appendix); in Corson's *Primer of English Verse,* chap. x; and in Courthope's *History of English Poetry,* vol. ii.

The tendency of criticism, characteristically, has been to favor the Italian type of sonnet, and to discountenance the freer forms of it, which neglect the regular rime-scheme and bipartate division. On the fundamental character of the structure Leigh Hunt observed, in connection with its supposed musical origin: "A sonnet is, in fact, or ought to be, a piece of music as well as of poetry; and as every lover of music is sensible of the division even of the smallest air into two parts, the second of which is the consequent or necessary demand of the first, and as these parts consist of phrases and cadences, which have similar sequences and demands of their own, so the composition called a sonnet, being a long air or melody, becomes naturally divided into two different strains, each of which is subdivided in like manner; and as quatrains constitute the one strain, and terzettes the other, we are to suppose this kind of musical demand the reason why the limitation to fourteen lines became, not a rule without a reason, but an harmonious necessity." Regarding the full observance of the structural possibilities of the form, as outlined by Tomlinson, Professor Corson says: "This extreme of organic elaboration is not found in many English sonnets. It evidently does not suit the English genius. There is, it must be admitted, a certain artistic satis-

faction in such strictness of workmanship; but this strictness is more than compensated for, in the greatest English sonnets, by the high quality of the thought and feeling, in the two main divisions, taken as wholes." With reference to those sonnets in which the rhetorical structure conflicts with the metrical, Professor Lewis asks: "Why is not this really better than Rossetti's kind? Why does it not give us a higher pleasure, by suggesting a conflict between the thought and the sonnet-form? . . . I think we can perceive a beauty in the very freedom of the Wordsworthian movement which Rossetti's sonnets lack. Nevertheless I prefer Rossetti's strictness, and regard Rossetti as our greatest master of the sonnet-form. My ear cannot grasp octaves and sestets as readily as it can grasp couplets, and it therefore is better pleased when their integrity is preserved and emphasized; and octaves and sestets, as compared with couplets, offer so much more freedom within their own limits that I feel no need of variation in the limits themselves." To which one might add: why adopt so elaborate a scheme as that of the sonnet, if there is nothing in its structure to which the thought is to be fitted? One may enjoy a group of marbles placed without formal arrangement as well as a similar group set in niches of appropriate size; yet if niches and marbles are both present, perfect satisfaction tends to demand that they appear to be made for each other.

French lyrical forms.

In the next place we have to notice certain stanzaic lyrical forms which in strictness of form are closely related to the sonnet, but which are used, for the most part, in the expression of wholly different themes and

moods. Imitations of French forms, they are found chiefly in the poetry of Chaucer's time and that written—with conscious revival of the old courtly manner—in the late Victorian age. Their intricacy is usually so conspicuous that a good part of their pleasurableness arises from the reader's sense of difficulty overcome by skill; and for the same reason they are scarcely used with lyrical spontaneity, but rather for the expression of themes naturally fitted to the affectation of antiquated style and courtly formality of structure. So-called *vers de société* (see chapter ii) is particularly likely to be found in these forms. Two different moods may be distinguished as characteristic of them: one purely playful, yet redolent of good breeding, the other seriously, perhaps even pathetically, devoted to reminiscence or reverie. Finally, since nearly all these French forms are based on the repetition of one or more refrain verses, they are characterized by an intense unity which amounts to a pleasing monotony.

The Triolet is the briefest and least dignified of the group,*—a poem of eight verses with two rime sounds, the first and second verses recurring as the seventh and eighth, and the first also recurring as the fourth. The scheme is ABaAabAB.† As a notably successful

The triolet.

* The triolet is really a short form of the Rondeau (see below).

† The capitals indicate the repeated or refrain lines.

example one may take this triolet of Austin Dobson's:

"Rose kissed me to-day;
Will she kiss me to-morrow?
Let it be as it may,
Rose kissed me to-day.
But the pleasure gives way
To a savor of sorrow;—
Rose kissed me to-day,—
Will she kiss me to-morrow?"

In this example is illustrated that delicate change in the accent and meaning of the refrain which, in all these forms, gives an added charm to the structural effect.

The Rondeau and Rondel are closely related types,—the two words being different forms of the same original, now used for convenience with distinct meanings. The rondel commonly contains fourteen verses, two of which serve as refrain; various rime schemes are in use, the most familiar being *ABbaabABabbaAB*. Sometimes the last *B* line is omitted. The rondeau form commonly consists of thirteen full verses, with an additional shorter verse used as an unrimed refrain, taken from the opening of the first verse, and repeated after the eighth and the thirteenth verses. The favorite rime scheme is *aabbaaabRaabbaR*. Of the second type the following is an example by the late W. E. Henley:

The rondeau and rondel.

"What is to come we know not. But we know
That what has been was good—was good to show,
Better to hide, and best of all to bear.
We are the masters of the days that were:
We have lived, we have loved, we have suffered—
even so.
Shall we not take the ebb who had the flow?
Life was our friend. Now, if it be our foe—
Dear, though it break and spoil us!—need we care
What is to come?
Let the great winds their worst and wildest blow,
Or the gold weather round us mellow slow:
We have fulfilled ourselves, and we can dare
And we can conquer, though we may not share
In the rich quiet of the afterglow
What is to come."

The villanelle.

The Villanelle is a form of nineteen verses, divided into five groups of three and a final group of four, all based on two rimes. The first and third verses are used as the refrain, the first reappearing as line six, line twelve and line eighteen, while the third reappears in the ninth, the fifteenth, and the nineteenth place. The rime scheme of all the tercets is *aba,* of the conclusion *abaa.* This form is favored for pastoral or idyllic themes, or—in Mr. Austin Dobson's phrase,—for subjects "full of sweetness and simplicity." His own villanelle beginning "When I saw you last, Rose," is one of the most charming in the language; other specimens of interest are Henley's "A dainty thing's the Villanelle," and Mr. Gosse's "Wouldst thou not be content to die."

The Ballade, on the whole the most used and the least artificial of all these forms, commonly appears as a poem in three stanzas of either eight or ten verses, followed by an envoy in four or five.* The rime-sounds of all the stanzas are the same, but the rime-words distinct. The refrain forms the last verse of each stanza, including the envoy. The favorite rime-scheme is *ababbcbC,* with the envoy *bcbC*. One of the finest of English ballades is Chaucer's on *Truth* (called also "Balade de bon conseyl"); of this all the stanzas, including the envoy, are in the seven-verse "rime royal" form. Modern ballades of distinction are Rossetti's translation of Villon's *Ballade of Dead Ladies* (which contains, however, more rime-sounds than are permitted in the stricter form), Swinburne's *Ballad of François Villon* (in ten-line stanzas), and some of those included in Mr. Andrew Lang's *Ballades of Blue China.* There is also an extended form of the ballade, called the *Chant Royal,* with five stanzas of eleven verses, riming *ababccddedE,* and envoy *ddedE*. Of this form Mr. Gleeson White observes: "The chant royal in the old form is usually devoted to the unfolding of an allegory in its five stanzas, the envoy supplying the key; but this is not always observed in modern ex-

The ballade.

* The envoy was formerly addressed to the "Prince" in whose service the courtly poet was writing, and the modern ballade often imitates this conventional address. Occasionally the envoy is omitted.

amples. Whatever be the subject, however, it must always march in stately rhythm with splendid imagery, using all the poetic adornments of sonorous, highly-wrought lines and rich embroidery of words, to clothe a theme in itself a lofty one. Unless the whole poem is constructed with intense care, the monotony of its sixty-one * lines rhymed on five sounds is unbearable." (Introduction to *Ballades and Rondeaus,* p. liv.) An admirable example is Mr. Gosse's *Praise of Dionysus.*

The Sestina, most difficult of all these artificial forms, is a poem in six stanzas of six verses, with an envoy or conclusion of three verses. There is no refrain, and usually no rime, but the end-words in all the stanzas are the same, while in the concluding tercet the same six words are used for the seventh time,—three of them in the middle of the verses, the other three at the end. The order of the end-words in each stanza changes according to an intricate scheme: thus if the end-words of the first stanza be represented by ABCDEF, the order in the second stanza will be FAEBDC, in the third CFDABE, in the fourth ECBFAD, in the fifth DEACFB, in the sixth BDFECA. Rarely the end-words rime by twos or threes. Interesting examples of this form are a *Sestina* by Mr. Gosse, in which he relates the traditional origin of the type as the invention of the

The sestina.

* *Sic ;* apparently for sixty.

troubadour Arnaut Daniel, and Kipling's *Sestina of the Tramp Royal.*

The pantoum.

The Pantoum (which belongs to this group, although it is ultimately of Malaysian rather than European origin) is a form of an indeterminate number of stanzas of four verses, riming alternately. The second and fourth verses of each stanza are repeated as the first and third of the succeeding stanza, while the second and fourth of the last stanza are repetitions of the first and third of the first stanza. Thus each line is used twice, and the end of the poem returns to the beginning. For obvious reasons, this form is used chiefly to describe any dull round of repetition. Perhaps the best of English pantoums is the *Monologue d'outre Tombe,* published in the collection called *Love in Idleness* (1883).

The best account of these artificial French forms will be found in Mr. Gleeson White's Introduction to the anthology called *Ballades and Rondeaus.* Other discussions of their history and qualities occur in Mr. Austin Dobson's "Note on Some Foreign Forms of Verse," in the anthology called *Latter Day Lyrics,* and in Mr. Andrew Lang's *Ballads and Lyrics of Old France.* Of Mr. Dobson's remarks the following are of special interest: "It may be conceded that the majority of the forms now in question are not at present suited for. . . . the treatment of grave or elevated themes. What is modestly advanced for them. . . . is that they may add a new charm of buoyancy,—a lyric freshness,—to amatory and familiar verse already too

much condemned to faded measures and out-worn cadences. Further, . . . that they are admirable vehicles for the expression of trifles or *jeux d'esprit.* They have also a humbler and obscurer use. If, to quote the once-hackneyed, but now too-much-forgotten maxim of Pope—

'Those move easiest that have learned to dance,'

what better discipline, among others, could possibly be devised for 'those about to versify' than a course of Rondeaux, Triolets, and Ballades?" (*Latter Day Lyrics,* p. 334.) Mr. Gleeson White, in pointing out the need for strict observance of the rules of these forms, observes: "No one is compelled to use these complex forms, but if chosen, their laws must be obeyed to the letter if success is to be obtained. The chief pleasure they yield consists in the apparent spontaneity, which is the result of genius, if genius be indeed the art of taking infinite pains; or, if that definition is rejected, they must yet exhibit the art which conceals art, whether by intense care in every minute detail, or a happy faculty for wearing these fetters." (*Ballades and Rondeaus,* p. li.)

The ode.

Finally we have to consider the Ode, the most extensive of the metrical forms characterized by stanzaic elements, and at the opposite extreme from the sonnet, the ballade, and the like, in respect to limits of length and fixity of form. In the first place it must be noted that the term Ode is used with special reference to the content and style of poetry as well as to its metrical form; on this aspect of the ode, see chapter ii. Looked at from the standpoint of external form, the

ode is a lyrical type which preserves traces of its musical origin, being divided into stanzas or—more properly—strophes of varying length and metrical character, which (theoretically at least) might be sung to different forms of melody. Two different types are at once to be distinguished: the regular, in which certain strophic forms are chosen and rigorously followed, and the irregular, in which strophic formation changes from point to point, obeying no law save the suggestiveness of the theme and the emotion of the poet.

The strict Pindaric type.

The regular or strict "Pindaric" ode is modeled after Greek forms, and, like them, is usually divided into three types of stanza, the strophe, antistrophe, and epode, which may be repeated indeterminately. The strophe and antistrophe are properly of the same metrical form, the epode of a different form; when each recurs, the same scheme is repeated, but with new rimes and a further development of thought.* All these stanzaic forms are commonly of the more elaborate sort, containing from seven or eight to twenty or thirty verses, with great variety in metrical length and arrangement of rime. This variety and freedom may be thought peculiarly appropriate for the expression of an exalted emotional theme; while on

* The epode is usually in more regular continuous metre than the strophe and antistrophe. It is variously placed; sometimes (as in Collins's *Ode to Liberty*) between strophe and antistrophe; sometimes a single epode is used as the conclusion to the ode.

the other hand the regular progression and balance of the several strophes, viewed as wholes, seem to restrain the poetical utterance under the guidance of a dominating intellectual control. The leading examples of English odes of this character are Collins's *Ode to Liberty*, Gray's *Progress of Poesy*, and Shelley's *Ode to Naples*.* The first of these consists of a single strophe and antistrophe, of twenty-five verses each (varying from four to six stresses), and two epodes in four-stress couplets; the second, of three groups of strophe, antistrophe, and epode, the strophes and antistrophes containing twelve verses, the epodes seventeen, all in varying metrical schemes; the third, of four epodes and six strophes and antistrophes, the former varying from twenty-two to twenty-nine verses, the latter alternating between fourteen and eleven. In more recent poetry such regular odes are very rare. The intricacy of their structure is so considerable that it cannot be perceived by the ear, or its perfection be readily understood, unless the imagination is able to conceive the ode as uttered with corresponding movements of music and choral dancing, as in the ancient manner. When regularity of form is attained on too large a scale to be apprehended by the senses, it is hardly distinguishable from irregularity.

* Coleridge's *Ode to the Departing Year* assumes the regular Pindaric form, and is divided into "strophes," "antistrophes," and "epodes," but they follow no regular scheme.

Between the regular and the irregular ode is a group of odes based on a single type of elaborate strophe, which may vary slightly in the course of the poem, but not sufficiently to result in contrasted types. Examples are Spenser's two great marriage odes, the *Prothalamion* and *Epithalamion*: in the former all the strophes are of eighteen verses, with the fundamental rime scheme *abbaabcbcbddcdeeff*, the fifth, tenth, fifteenth and sixteenth verses being shortened to three stresses, and with some variation of the rime scheme in certain strophes; in the latter the strophes vary from seventeen to nineteen verses, and are based on a similar elaborate rime scheme which varies slightly in different parts of the poem. Collins's ode on *The Superstitions of the Highlands* is in a similar stanza of seventeen verses, riming *abbacdcdefefghghh;* Coleridge's *Ode to France* in a similar stanza of twenty-one verses, riming *abbacdcdeefgfghihjjij.*

The homostrophic type.

The irregular ode (formerly often called "Pindaric," because of a mistaken impression that the odes of Pindar were without fixed strophic form or order) is written in strophes similar to those just considered, but each stands quite by itself in respect to length and rime scheme. This form therefore preserves and enlarges the opportunity for adapting the metrical form flexibly to the ebb and flow of emotional utterance, but loses the restraint which imposes a

The irregular type.

kind of logical order upon the movement of the poem. The result is limitless opportunity in the hands of a skilful craftsman, but dangerous license in the hands of one whose sense of form is in need of guidance. Cowley, the founder of the irregular ode, amusingly described its character in one of his own experiments in the form:

"'Tis an unruly and a hard-mouth'd horse, . . .
Now prances stately, and anon flies o'er the place;
Disdains the servile law of any settled pace;
Conscious and proud of his own natural force,
'Twill no unskilful touch endure,
But flings writer and reader too that sits not sure."
(Ode on *The Resurrection.*)

Notwithstanding this dangerous freedom, some of the most splendid lyrics of modern English poetry have assumed the form of the irregular ode. Their success appears to be due to a definite progression of thought which maintains the unity and consecutiveness of the poem, while the shifting strophic structure and metrical variety permit the form to represent the tension and relaxation of the poet's emotion.* Important examples are Dryden's ode on Mistress Killigrew, in ten irregular strophes varying in length from thirteen to thirty-nine verses; Wordsworth's ode on *Intimations of Immortality,* in eleven strophes varying from eight to thirty-nine verses; Tennyson's ode on *The Death of Welling-*

* See, on this subject, chapter ii, p. 67 above.

ton, in nine movements (the longer of which can hardly be called strophes) varying from five to seventy verses, and Lowell's *Commemoration Ode,* in twelve movements varying from fourteen to sixty verses.* In the *Wellington* ode the progress from part to part is based, to some degree, upon the represented movement of time, the poet's comment following the burial of the Duke from the starting of the funeral pageant until

"The black earth yawns, the mortal disappears."

In the other instances the progress is chiefly spiritual; yet in the *Immortality* ode there is also a suggestion of movement in time, the poem taking its rise in a memory of childhood experiences, passing through the reflections inspired by a May day in maturer years, through various changes of emotion, to the concluding pause among

"Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

Of this great ode Professor Corson observes: "The several metres are felt . . . to be organic—inseparable from what each is employed to express. . . . Wordsworth never wrote any poem of which it can be more truly said, 'Of the soul the body form doth take.'" (*Primer of En-*

* Not unworthy to be set beside these is the recent ode by Mr. W. V. Moody, called *An Ode in Time of Hesitation.*

glish Verse, pp. 32, 34.) On the other hand, Theodore Watts, while admitting that it is "the finest irregular ode in the language," finds that "the length of the lines and the arrangement of the rimes are not always inevitable; they are, except on rare occasions, governed neither by stanzaic nor by emotional law." (Article on Poetry in *Encyc. Brit.*) The difference has to do with a point of intangible æsthetic judgment. Whichever view be taken as to the expressiveness of the details of the metrical structure, the *Immortality* ode is one of the noblest examples of the way in which the ode form develops progressively a single theme, and at the same time marks, in the series of strophic variations, the ebb and flow of the emotions gathering about that theme as it is elaborated in the poet's consciousness.

The choral type.

Of a different type are certain choral lyrics sometimes used in the drama, directly imitative of the choral odes which played so important a part in the Greek tragedy. The most important examples are the choral odes in Milton's *Samson Agonistes,* divided into "choruses" and "semi-choruses," in which the varying verse-lengths (sometimes used without rime, as in the Greek) are modeled after the flexible musical rhythms of the choruses of Æschylus and Sophocles. Similar examples are certain portions of Browning's *Agamemnon* and Arnold's *Empedocles on Etna.*

Related to the irregular ode in metrical quality are a large number of poems, chiefly of rather recent date, which may be regarded as the result of an effort to develop metrical forms capable of adapting themselves more flexibly to the movement of thought and feeling than the standard forms with fixed stanzaic structure. Examples of such irregular strophic formation will be found, with rimed verse, in Southey's *Curse of Kehama,* Arnold's *Dover Beach* and *The Buried Life,* Tennyson's *Revenge,* Browning's *Hervé Riel,* Swinburne's *Thalassius,* and many of the poems of Coventry Patmore (*The Unknown Eros,* and, among shorter poems, *Amelia* and *The Toys*); with unrimed verse, in Southey's *Thalaba,* Shelley's *Queen Mab,* Arnold's *The Future* and *Philomela,* and many of the poems of the late W. E. Henley. As to the more daring of these experiments critical opinion is strongly divided. In general, two things seem fairly certain: first, that such irregular measures are likely to be more pleasing with rime than without it; second, that these forms can be regarded as legitimate only in so far as they seem really to represent the content and the emotional movement of the poem, and not to be by any possibility the result of accident or imperfect fashioning. Even when admittedly pleasing, such formless poems are likely to approach the point where the great function of art—to give unity and order to the chaotic data of life—seems to have lost

Related irregular verse forms.

its power. It is from this standpoint that Professor Lewis criticises some of the romantically lawless verse of Mr. Henley: "There is no pleasure in the successive gratification and disappointment of the reader's expectation, for the reader is not encouraged to form any expectations whatever; there is no conflict between the rhythm and the metrical scheme, for there is no metrical scheme. . . . The fact is that within the limits of a fixed form there is ample scope for freedom, and to reject form altogether generally suggests artistic decadence rather than strength." (*Principles of English Verse*, p. 100.)

Discussions of the various ode forms will be found in the introductions to Mr. Gosse's *English Odes* and William Sharp's *Great Odes*, in Professor Bronson's introduction to the Athenæum Press edition of Collins, and Coventry Patmore's Preface to *The Unknown Eros*. The choral odes of Milton are analyzed by Bridges in *Milton's Prosody*, and are commented on by Swinburne in his *Essays and Studies*. "It is hard to realize and hopeless to reproduce the musical force of classic metres so recondite and exquisite as the choral parts of a Greek play. Even Milton could not; though with his godlike instinct and his godlike might of hand he made a kind of strange and enormous harmony by intermixture of assonance and rhyme with irregular blank verse." (p. 162.) Bronson, commenting on the artificial character of the strict Pindaric ode in English, observes: "The reason is obvious. The Greek odes were accompanied by music and dancing, the singers moving to one side during the

strophe, retracing their steps during the antistrophe (which was for that reason metrically identical with the strophe), and standing still during the epode. The ear was thus helped by the eye, and the divisions of the ode were distinct and significant. But in an English Pindaric the elaborate correspondences and differences between strophe, antistrophe, and epode are lost upon most readers, and even the critical reader derives from them a pleasure intellectual rather than sensuous." (Introduction to Collins, p. lxxv. In the same section the metrical forms of the odes of Collins are elaborately analyzed.)

Finally, with reference to the tendency toward irregular metrical forms, one may note some interesting remarks of Mr. Courthope, in his lectures on *Life in Poetry*, on the subject of "eccentric" or "private" art forms as connected with the want of a truly universal or representative character in poetic expression. Such tendencies, in his view, are due to the exaggeration of individualism, and a neglect of the more than national character which poetry normally has, as conforming to the traditions of a particular race, language, and literature. Addressing Walt Whitman, in reply to his lines opening—

"Oneself I sing, a simple, separate person,"

Mr. Courthope says: "If you had anything of universal interest to say about yourself, you could say it in a way natural to one of the metres, or metrical movements, established in the English language. What you call metre bears precisely the same relation to these universal laws of expression, as the Mormon Church and the religion of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young bear to the doctrines of Catholic Christendom." To

the same effect are the observations of Dorchain in his *L'Art des Vers* (chap. xvi), on the so-called "*vers libres*" of certain French writers. "If the end of all art is, in the words of a certain philosopher, to produce 'an æsthetic emotion of a social character,' we have seen these writers come near accomplishing the paradox implied in the words—'anti-social art.'"

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INDEX.

Abbott, E. A., on Shakspere's verse, 245.
Accent, its nature in English, 165 n.; altered to fit metre, 167-173; degrees of, 166, 167; etymological and rhetorical distinguished, 165, 166; laws of, in English verse, 171–173; relation of to quantity, 178–180, 187–190.
Addison, J., *Cato*, 84 n.; on the imagination, 94; on poetic justice, 89.
Akenside, M., *Pleasures of the Imagination*, 22.
Alcaic verse, 288, 322.
Aldrich, T. B., *Thalia*, 73.
Alexander, H. B., on epic poetry, 48 n.; on the imagination, 104; on tragedy, 90.
Alexandrine verse, 276.
Allegory, 147, 148.
Allen, G., on poetical style, 139 n.; on tone-quality, 218.
Alliteration, 209.
Alliterative long line, 268.
Amphibrach, 234.
Anacrusis, 255–257.
Anapest, 223.
Anapestic metres, 277–280; freedom and variety of, 252; relation of to dactylic, 228; relation of to iambic, 230.
Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, 107.
Aristotle, on epic poetry, 45; on metre, 27; on poetic imitation, 9, 11, 12; on poetry compared with history, 116; on tragedy, 79, 80, 87n.; on the unities, 85.
Aristophanes, anapestic verse of, 278 n.
Arnold, M., *Buried Life*, 346; *Dover Beach*, 346; *East London*, 327; *Empedocles on Etna*, 345; *Forsaken Merman*, 54, 96, 247, 248; *Future*, 346; *Morality*, 313; *Philomela*, 346; *Rugby Chapel*, 66, 129, 130; *Scholar-Gypsy*, 319; *Sohrab and Rustum*, 48, 53; *Thyrsis*, 69, 319; *Tristram and Iseult*, 52; on dactylic hexameter, 286; on the nature of poetry, 2.
Art, basis of in imitation and creation, 4, 9; universal quality of, 12; relation of to beauty, 112, 115.
Arts, plastic, compared with poetry, 5–8.
Assonance, 210.
Austin, A., on the nature of poetry, 3.

Bacon, F., on the nature of poetry, 9, 11, 19, 116.
Ballad, 50, 51.
Ballade, 336.
Battle of Otterburn, 51.
Beaumont and Fletcher, *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, 92; *Philaster*, 91.
Beauty, place of in poetry, 112–117; relation of to style, 141; relation of to rhythm, 193–195; relation of to sounds of verse, 217; relation of to truth, 117; relation of to ugliness, 114, 115.
Beers, H. A., on the Bowles controversy, 127.
Belden, H. M., on Donne's verse, 174, 175.

Bénard, C., *La Poétique par Hegel*, see Hegel.
Beowulf, 43.
Blackie, J. S., on dactylic hexameter, 285.
Blank verse, 271–276; use of in narrative poetry, 274; in the drama, 76; flexibility of, 252; syllabic regularity of, 240 n., 245, 272 n.
Blow, northern wind, 319.
Bolton, T. L., on the nature of rhythm, 157n.
Bossu, R. le, on epic poetry, 45.
Bowles, S., on the subject matter of poetry, 127.
Bradley, A. C., on tragedy, 79, 90.
Bridges, R., *Thou didst delight my eyes*, 313; on dactylic hexameter, 285; on Milton's verse, 245 n., 347; on stress as the basis of metre, 224; on syllabic verse, 272 n.
Bright, J. W., on secondary accent, 173, 174.
Bronson, W. C., on the Pindaric ode, 347.
Brown, G. D., on secondary accent, 174.
Browning, E. B., *Cry of the Children*, 248; *Dead Rose*, 310; *Sonnets*, 327.
Browning, R. B.: *Abt Vogler*, 35, 66; *Agamemnon*, 345; *Andrea del Sarto*, 35; *Boy and the Angel*, 306; *Caliban upon Setebos*, 114, 214; *Cavalier Tunes*, 63, 282; *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*, 314; *Confessional*, 35, 312; *Dramatic Lyrics*, 34; *Evelyn Hope*, 13; *Fifine at the Fair*, 37, 119, 276; *Fra Lippo Lippi*, 35; *Guardian Angel*, 315; *Heretic's Tragedy*, 214; *Hervé Riel*, 54, 346; *James Lee's Wife*, 36; *La Saisiaz*, 281; *Love Among the Ruins*, 281; *One Word More*, 282; *Paracelsus*, 250; *Pippa Passes*, 81; *Prospice*, 65, 246; *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, 37, 144, 313; *Ring and the Book*, 36, 120, 124, 250; *Saul*, 279, 280; *Sordello*, 49, 270; *Statue and the Bust*, 301; *Two in the Campagna*, 35, 312; decasyllabic couplet of, 270; dramas of, 82; tone-quality in verse of, 214; triple rimes of, 293; on truth as related to art, 119, 120.
Brunetière, F., on the lyric, 65 n.
Burlesque drama, 92.
Burns, R., *Auld Lang Syne*, 185; *Birks of Aberfeldy*, 319; *Bonnie Doon*, 308; *Cotter's Saturday Night*, 55; *Duncan Gray*, 320; *John Anderson*, 320; *Tam O'Shanter*, 54; *To a Louse*, 40; *To a Mouse*, 314; *To Mary in Heaven*, 57; songs of, 63; subject matter of poetry widened by, 126.
Butcher, S. H., on Aristotle's theory of poetry, 11, 12, 17; on primitive Greek poetry, 30; on tragic katharsis, 88 n.
Butler, S., *Hudibras*, 50.
Byron, Lord, *Cain*, 264 n.; *Childe Harold*, 55, 318; *Destruction of Sennacherib*, 278; *Don Juan*, 52, 316; *Farewell, if ever fondest prayer*, 316; *Isles of Greece*, 64; *Manfred*, 81; *She Walks in Beauty*, 313; *Stanzas to Augusta*, 57; dramas of, 82; romances of, 52; satiric poetry of, 40; on the subject matter of poetry, 127; triple endings and rimes of, 256, 292.

Caine, H., on the sonnet, 331.
Calverley, C. S., *vers de société* of, 73.
Campion, T., pseudo-classical verse of, 322.
Carew, T., *vers de société* of, 73.
Carey, H., *Sally in our Alley*, 320.
Carlyle, T., on the nature of poetry, 3.

Carpenter, F. I., on lyric poetry, 59.
Catalexis, 255, 262.
Cayley, C. B., *Divina Commedia*, 301.
Cesura, 258–261; in alexandrine verse, 276; in septenary verse, 277.
Chant royal, 336.
Chapman, G., *Iliad*, 277.
Chatterton, T., *Ælla*, 318.
Chaucer, G., *Ballade of Truth*, 336; *Canterbury Tales*, 52, 55; *Troilus and Cressida*, 52; decasyllabic verse of, 269; femminine rimes of, 292; imagination of, 107; rime royal stanza of, 314; his use of the term tragedy, 86 n.
Chopin, F., *tempo rubato* of, 188.
Choriambus, 235.
Chronicle plays, 82.
Cid, 43.
Clark, J., on epic poetry, 45.
Classical drama, 82–85.
Closet drama, 81.
Clough, A. H., *Bothie of Toberna-Vuolich*, 52 n., 282; *Sic Itur*, 307.
Coleridge, S. T., *Ancient Mariner*, 51, 126, 152, 153, 294; *Christabel*, 107, 182, 268; *Ode to France*, 342; *Ode to the Departing Year*, 341 n.; *Satyrane Letters*, 275; *Shakspere Lectures*, 85; imagination of, 107; on the function of metre, 136, 203; on imagination and fancy, 108-111; on the *Lyrical Ballads*, 126; on the nature of poetry, 1, 18 n.; on the term poetry, 15 n.; on poetic diction, 134–136.
Collins, J. C., on tragedy, 90.
Collins, W., *Ode to Evening*, 65, 146, 302; *Ode to Liberty*, 67, 340 n., 341; *Ode on the Passions*, 147; *Superstitions of the Highlands*, 342.
Combarieu, J., on the relation of music and poetry, 8; on the relation of rhythm and emotion, 196 n.
Comedy, 85, 86.
Common metre quatrain, 277, 306 n.
Communal poetry, 28, 50.
Concreteness in poetical style, 138–142.
Consonants, place of in tone-quality, 209–212.
Corneille, P., *Discourses*, 85; *Le Cid*, 85.
Corson, H., on blank verse, 275; on metrical variation, 249; on rime, 299; on the sonnet, 331; on Tennyson's stanzas, 323, 324; on tone-quality, 218; on Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality*, 344; his system of stress notation, 241.
Courthope, W. J., on the function of metre, 199; on irregular verse, 348; on the nature of poetry, 3; on the sonnet, 331.
Cowley, A., odes of, 343; *vers de société* of, 73.
Cowper, W., *My Mary*, 308, 320; *O for a closer walk with God*, 64; *Shrubbery*, 308; *Task*, 37; didactic poetry of, 39.
Creative imagination, 9, 10, 95–97.
Cummings, P., on dactylic hexameter, 286.

Dabney, J. P., on musical notation for verse, 191.
Dactyl, 223.
Dactylic metres, 282–287.
Daniel, S., *Civil Wars*, 49.
Dante, *Divina Commedia*, 48 n., 86 n., 107; terza rima of, 301.
Decasyllabic couplet, 269–271.
Decasyllabic verse, reason for its vogue in English, 268, 269.
Descriptive poetry, 33, 34, 54, 55.
Dekker, T., *O Sweet Content*, 63.
Dennis, J., on poetic justice, 89.

Dickens, C., rhythmical prose of, 162, 163.
Diction of poetry, 128–154.
Didactic poetry, 37–39.
Dipody, trochaic, 236.
Dirge, 69.
Ditrochee, 236.
Dobson, A., *Rose kissed me today*, 334; *When I saw you last, Rose*, 335; *vers de société* of, 73; on artificial French stanza forms, 338; on *vers de société*, 72.
Donne, J., elegies of, 68; metre of, 174, 175.
Dorchain, A., on irregular verse, 349; on rime, 299.
Dowden, E., on the text of Wordsworth's poems, 151, 152 n.
Dramatic poetry, 74–92; its principal kinds, 80–92; use of blank verse in, 76, 274, 275; decline of, 78.
Dramatic lyric, 35.
Dramatic romance, 91.
Drayton, M., *Agincourt*, 35, 317; *Mortimeriad*, 49; *Polyolbion*, 276.
Dryden, J., *Absalom and Achitophel*, 148; *Alexander's Feast*, 68; *All for Love*, 83; *Conquest of Granada*, 82; *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, 85; *Hind and the Panther*, 148; *Ode on Mistress Killigrew*, 343; *Religio Laici*, 22, 39; *Preface to Virgil*, 45; *Song for St. Cecilia's Day*, 99; decasyllabic couplet of, 271; odes of, 67; metrical romances of, 52; satires of, 40.

Elegiac hexameter, 287.
Elegy, 68, 69.
Eliot, G., *O may I join the choir invisible*, 66.
Elision, 243–245.
Ellerton, J., *Welcome, Happy Morning*, 63.
Ellis, A. J., on metrical variation, 252; his system of stress notation, 240.
Ellis, R., his imitations of classical metres, 323.
Emerson, R. W., on the function of metre, 195, 198; on the nature of poetry, 2; on the relation of poetry and truth, 119; on the subject matter of poetry, 123.
Emotion, relation of to poetry, 18; relation of to poetical style, 150–153; relation of to rhythm, 195–197.
End-pause, 261–264.
Enjambement, 263.
Epic poetry, 41–55; the national epic the type of *par excellence*, 42–48; related types, 49–55; decline of, 47, 48.
Epic simile, 144.
Erskine, J., on the lyric, 61, 65 n.
Euripides, *Alcestis*, 86 n.
Everett, C. C., on the imagination, 104.
Every Man, 148.
Expository poetry, 39.

Faber, F. W., religious lyrics of, 64.
Fable, 54.
Fancy, relation of to the imagination, 102–112.
Feminine cesura, 259.
Feminine ending, 256, 257.
Feminine rime, 291.
Fielding, H., *Tom Thumb the Great*, 92.
Figures in poetical style, 142–149.
Fitzgerald, E., *Rubaiyat*, 310.
Five-stress verse, rimed, 268–271; unrimed, 271–276.
Fletcher, J., *Faithful Shepherdess*, 41, 81; *Wild-Goose Chase*, 256; (with Shakspere) *Two Noble Kinsmen*, 313; (with Beaumont, see Beaumont and Fletcher).
Foot, significance of the term for English verse, 222–224, 239 n.; the principal kinds, 223;

terminology of as related to classical prosody, 236.
Four-stress verse, syllabic, 266; irregular, 267.
French lyrical forms, 332–339.
Freytag, G., on the drama, 80.

Galliambic metre, 288.
Gasté, A., on the *Cid* controversy, 85.
Gay, J., fables of, 54.
Gayley, C. M., on the epic, 42; on the nature of poetry, 4; on rhetorical figures, 149; (with Scott, F. N.) on definitions of poetry, 4.
Goethe, J. W. von, on prose in tragedy, 201.
Goldsmith, O., *Deserted Village*, 55.
Goodell, T. D., on quantity in English, 189.
Gosse, E., *Praise of Dionysus*, 337; *Sestina*, 337; *Wouldst thou not be content to die*, 335; on the ode, 67, 347.
Gray, T., *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, 68, 146, 199, 308; *Hymn to Adversity*, 146; *Ode on Eton College*, 319; *Progress of Poesy*, 68, 341.
Guest, E., on tone-quality, 218.
Gummere, F. B., on the ballad, 30; on figures and tropes, 142 n; on the function of metre, 17, 205; on lyrical poetry, 56, 59; on primitive poetry, 29, 30.
Gurney, E., on the function of metre, 203; on tone-quality, 215, 218.
Guyau, M., on the metrical alteration of syllables, 188 n.; on the relation of rhythm and emotion, 196 n.; on rime, 299, 300.

Half-stressed rime, 296.
Hazlitt, W., on the function of metre, 198; on the nature of poetry, 2; on poetry and prose distinguished, 24.
Heber, R., *The Son of God goes forth to war*, 64.
Hegel, G. W. F., on the classification of poetry, 32; on the drama, 80; on the epic, 42, 46; on the lyric, 60; on metre, 17; on poetry as related to other arts, 7; on truth and ideality in poetry, 120, 121.
Henley, W. E., *A dainty thing's the Villanelle*, 335; *What is to come*, 335; verse of, 15, 346, 347.
Herbert, G., stanzas of, 306 n.
Heroic couplet, 269, 271.
Heroic play, 82.
Heroic quatrain, 308.
Herrick, R., *To Julia*, 307; *vers de société* of, 73.
Hexameter, dactylic, 282–287.
History-plays, 82.
Holmes, O. W., *Dorothy Q.*, 73; *Last Leaf*, 73.
Homer, *Iliad*, 43; *Odyssey*, 43.
Homeric simile, 144.
Hood, T., *Bridge of Sighs*, 65, 256, 282, 293.
Horace, stanzas of, imitated, 322.
Hovering accent, 170, 175.
How, W. W., *For all the Saints*, 64.
Hunt, L., *Abou Ben Adhem*, 54; on the function of metre, 194; on imagination and fancy, 106, 107; on the nature of poetry, 2; on the sonnet, 331; on the subject matter of poetry, 123.
Hurst, A. S., on the time relations of various metres, 229 n.
Hymn, 63, 64.

Iambus, 223.
Iambic metres, 264–277; why preferred in English poetry, 265.
Iambic-anapestic metre, 246.
Identical rime, 298.

Idyl, 54 n.
Imagination, relation of to poetry, 19–21, 93–112; as a form of memory, 93–95; creative, 95–97; interpretative, 97–102; relation of to fancy, 102–112.
Imitation as a basis of poetry, 9–12.
Imperfect rime, 296–298.
Ingelow, J., *In the morning, O so early*, 236.
Internal rime, 293–295.
Inversion of feet, 242.
Irregular metres, 246–251, 267, 346–348.
Italian sonnet form, 326.

Johnson, S., on the general or universal in poetry, 122; on poetic justice, 89; on tone-quality, 216; on the unities, 85.
Jonson, B., *Drink to me only with thine eyes*, 63; masques of, 81.

Kalevala, 43.
Kames, Lord, on the unities, 85.
Katharsis, Aristotle's theory of, 87 n.
Keats, J., *Autumn*, 66, 147; *Endymion*, 270, 271; *Eve of St. Agnes*, 54, 318; *Fancy*, 281; *Grasshopper and Cricket*, 327, 328; *Hyperion*, 274; *Isabella*, 316; *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, 51; *Lamia*, 271; *Mermaid Tavern*, 281; *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, 58, 66, 100, 117; *Ode to a Nightingale*, 66, 319; *Ode to Psyche*, 141; *Robin Hood*, 281; decasyllabic couplet of, 270, 271; as the poet of physical sensations, 94, 95.
Kennings, 149.
Ker, W. P., on epic poetry, 45.
King Horn, 49.
Kingsley, C., *Andromeda*, 283–285; *Three Fishers*, 320.
Kipling, R., *Danny Deever*, 35; *Last Chantey*, 185, 321; *McAndrew's Hymn*, 125; *Miracles*, 293; *Mulholland's Contract*, 307; *Sestina of the Tramp Royal*, 338; *Song of the English*, 235; *True Romance*, 317; the poetry of, 13.
Knight, W., on the relation of beauty to poetry, 120.

Lamartine, A. de, *Recueillements Poétiques*, 204 n.
Lamb, C., *Old Familiar Faces*, 64; on seven-syllable verse, 281 n.
Landor, W. S., *Agamemnon and Iphigeneia*, 48; *Gebir*, 48; on Milton's sonnets, 71.
Lang, A., on artificial French stanza forms, 338; *Ballades of Blue China*, 336.
Lanier, S., *Ballad of Trees and the Master*, 293; on pauses, 186; on verse rhythm as related to musical rhythm, 189, 191; on the nature of rhythm, 158; on tone-quality, 218.
Larminie, W., on assonance and rime, 299; on quantity in English, 189.
Lay, 49.
Layamon, *Brut*, 49.
Lessing, G. E., on the drama, 85.
Lewis, C. M., on anapestic verse, 280; on blank verse, 275; on irregular metres, 347; on Milton's verse, 245; on prose rhythm, 161; on rime, 299; on the romantic couplet, 271; on the sonnet, 332; on stanza forms, 325; on tone-quality, 215; on trochaic rhythm, 266.
Liddell, M. H., on metrical variation, 251; on the nature of English verse, 173, 189, 225; on the nature of poetry, 4; on the notation of verse, 241; on quantity in English, 189.
Light ending, 263.
Locker-Lampson, F., *To my*

Grandmother, 73; on *vers de société*, 73.
Longfellow, H. W., *Evangeline*, 52, 282, 284; *Golden Legend*, 282; *Hiawatha*, 281; *Maidenhood*, 307; *Sonnets on the Divina Commedia*, 327.
Lounsbury, T. R., on the unities, 84.
Love in Idleness, 338.
Lowell, J. R., *Commemoration Ode*, 68, 344; on the Spenserian stanza, 324.
Lyric poetry, 55–73; the true or song type, 62–64; related types, 64–73; metrical characteristics of, 58, 59, 252.
Lyrical ballad, 34, 35.
Lytton, Lord (Owen Meredith), *Indian Love Song*, 316; *Lucile*, 52 n.

McKay, J., on the time relations of various metres, 229 n.
Macaulay, T. B., *Horatius*, 129, 130; on the nature of poetry, 2.
Mahabharata, 43.
Marlowe, C., *Doctor Faustus*, 199.
Marsh, A. R., on the epic, 45.
Marvell, A., *Ode on Cromwell's Return*, 309.
Masculine cesura, 259.
Masculine rime, 291.
Masque, 81.
Masson, D., on Aristotle's and Bacon's theories of poetry, 11; on concreteness as a poetical quality, 139; on the function of metre, 204; on Milton's verse, 244; on the nature of poetry, 3; on poetry as distinguished from prose, 26.
Mayor, J. B., on the classification of metres, 240; on dactylic hexameter, 285; on metrical variation, 252, 253; on Milton's verse, 245; on theories of English rhythm, 225 n.
Medial cesura, 259–261.
Melton, W. F., on secondary accent, 174.
Meredith, G., *Phaëthon*, 288.
Metaphor, 144, 145.
Metonymy, 149 n.
Metre, distinguished from rhythm, 162–164; essential to poetry, 15; functions of, 193–206; irregular or mixed, 246–248, 346–349; principal types of, and how named, 231, 232; variations of, 241–257.
Metrical paragraph, 273.
Metrical romance, 51–53.
Mill, J. S., on poetry as distinguished from eloquence, 11, 24.
Miller, R. D., on secondary accent, 174.
Milton, J., *Comus*, 81; *Il Penseroso*, 280; *L'Allegro*, 280, 281; *Lycidas*, 41, 69; *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, 254, 317; *On his Blindness*, 57, 327; *Paradise Lost*, 44, 47, 107, 144, 183, 250, 273; *Paraphrase of the Second Psalm*, 301; *Paraphrase of the Sixth Psalm*, 310; *Samson Agonistes*, 345; choral odes of, 345, 347; elision in the verse of, 244, 245; inverted feet in the verse of, 253; sonnets of, 70, 71; tone-quality in the verse of, 214, 216; on tragedy, 87 n.
Mock epic, 50.
Monodrama, 36.
Monologue d'outre Tombe, 338.
Moody, W. V., *Menagerie*, 35; *Ode in Time of Hesitation*, 344 n.
Moore, T., *Believe me, if all those endearing young charms*, 278.
Moralities, 148.
Morris, W., *Defence of Guenevere*, 301; *Earthly Paradise*, 315; *Iceland First Seen*, 315; *Love is Enough*, 320; metrical romances of, 52.

Moulton, R. G., on tragedy, 90.
Music, compared with poetry, 5, 30; relation of its rhythm to that of verse, 157–159; notation of as used for verse, 191–193, 237.

Nash, T., *Spring, the Sweet Spring*, 63.
Neale, J. M., *Jerusalem the Golden*, 63.
Neutral style, 129, 130, 136 n.
Newcomer, A. G., on rime, 299.
Newman, J. H., *Lead, Kindly Light*, 64.
Niebelungenlied, 43.
Notation, systems of metrical, 191–193, 237–241; for stanza forms, 306 n.

Octosyllabic couplet, 266, 267.
Ode, 66–68, 339–345; choral type, 345; irregular type, 342; strict Pindaric type, 340.
Omond, T. S., on accent and stress, 165 n.; on the amphibrach, 234; on dactylic hexameter, 286; on the division of metrical feet, 239; on dropped syllables, 186; on metrical variation, 248; on quantity in English, 189; on the relation of iambic and trochaic metres, 230; on the relation of musical rhythm and that of verse, 192, 193; on the relation of quantity and accent, 179; on verse length, 266 n.
Onomatopoeia, 213–216.
O'Shaughnessy, A., *Fountain of Tears*, 257, 278, 316; *Greater Memory*, 313; *St. John the Baptist*, 315; *Song of Palms*, 316 n.
Ottava rima, 315.

Paeon, 235.
Paeonic metre, 281.
Palgrave, F. T., on lyric poetry, 60.
Palmer, G. H., on Herbert's stanzas, 306 n.
Pantoum, 338.
Pastoral elegy, 69.
Pastoral poetry, 40, 41.
Patmore, C., *Amelia*, 346; *Toys*, 346; *Unknown Eros*, 346; on catalexis, 262 n.; on odes, 347.
Pauses, cesural, 258; filling rhythmical intervals, 183–187.
Personification, 145–147.
Phonetic syzygy, 211.
Phalæcian metre, 288.
Piers Plowman, 148, 268.
Pindaric ode, 340.
Pitch, relation of to the sounds of verse, 164 n., 165 n., 173, 207.
Poe, E. A., *Lenore*, 294 n., 295; *Raven*, 281; on the nature of poetry, 3; on quantity in English, 178, 189.
Poetic justice, 89–91.
Poetic license, 153, 154.
Poetry, defined, 1–4; an emotional art, 18; an imaginative art, 19–21; a representative art, 10; a rhythmical art, 15–17, 30; origins of, 4, 9, 26–30; relation of to music, 5, 30; relation of to the plastic arts, 5–8; relation of to prose, 23–26; style of, 128–154; subject matter of, 122–128; types of, 31–41; universal element of, 12–15, 121, 122.
Polly, put the kettle on, 185.
Pope, A., *Dunciad*, 40; *Essay on Criticism*, 22; *Essay on Man*, 199; *Iliad*, 261, 267; *Rape of the Lock*, 50, 107; didactic poetry of, 39; fancy of, 107; satiric poetry of, 40.
Praed, W. M., *vers de société* of, 73.
Prior, M., *A Better Answer*, 73.
Proctor, A. A., religious lyrics of, 64.
Prose, distinguished from poetry, 23–26; style of as related to that of poetry, 128–138; rhythm of,

160–164; use of in tragedy, 200–202.
Pseudo-classical metres, 288.
Pseudo-classical stanzas, 322.
Purgation, Aristotle's theory of, 87 n.
Pyrrhic, 233.

Quantity, in English verse, 175–193; laws of summarized, 186, 187; relation of to accent, 178–180, 187–190; in dactylic hexameter, 283–285.
Quatrains, 307–311.

Raleigh, W., on Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction, 137, 138.
Raymond, G. L., on tone-quality, 218.
Read, T. B., *Drifting*, 313.
Reconciling drama, 91.
Reflective poetry, 36, 37.
Refrain stanzas, 319–321.
Reynolds, J., on the universal in art, 121, 122.
Rhythm, defined, 155–158; relation of to English speech, 159–193; relation of to the nature of poetry, 193–206; relation of to beauty, 193–195; relation of to emotion, 195–197; relation of to the imagination, 199; as a means of idealization, 198–202.
Ribot, T. A., on the imagination, 104.
Rime, 290–300; functions of, 291; feminine, 291, 292; half-stressed, 296; identical, 298; internal, 293–295; triple, 291–293; relation of to the stanza, 302.
Rime couée, 313.
Rime riche, 298 n.
Rime royal stanza, 314.
Robertson, J. M., on quantity in English, 189.
Romance (prose), relation of to poetry, 23, 200 n.
Romantic drama, 82–85.
Rondeau and rondel, 334, 335.
Rossetti, C., *Bourne*, 312; *Mother Country*, 316; *Summer is Ended*, 312.
Rossetti, D. G., *Ballade of Dead Ladies*, 336; *Blessed Damosel*, 313; *Burden of Nineveh*, 319; *Love-Lily*, 296 n.; *Lovesight*, 327; *Love's Nocturn*, 315; *Rose Mary*, 311; *Sister Helen*, 51, 321; *Soothsay*, 315; *Sunset Wings*, 312; *Willowwood*, 168–172, 296 n.; sonnets of, 330, 332.
Run-on lines, 263, 264; in blank verse, 272, 273.
Ruskin, J., on the imagination, 111; on the nature of poetry, 3, 15 n.
Russell, C. E. on tone-quality, 219, 220.
Rymer, T., on the unities, 85.

Saintsbury, G., on distinguishing iambic and trochaic rhythm, 229; on the relation of accent and quantity, 190.
Sanford, E. C., on the time relations of various metres, 229 n.
Santayana, G., on the imagination, 104; on the ideal element in poetry, 120.
Sapphic stanza, 322.
Satiric poetry, 40.
Schelling, F. E., on lyric poetry, 59, 60; on *vers de société*, 72.
Schelling, F. W. j., on art, 110.
Schipper, J., on iambic-anapestic metres, 246 n.; on irregular four-stress verse, 268; on the stanza, 323.
Schlegel, A. W., on the drama, 79.
Science, relation of to poetry, 18, 124.
Scott, F. N., on the function of metre, 205, 206; on poetry as distinguished from prose, 25; on the rhythm of prose, 164 n.;

(with Gayley, C. M.) on definitions of poetry, 4.
Scott, W., *Lady of the Lake*, 52, 257; *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, 49 n.; *Marmion*, 52; *Proud Maisie*, 63; ballad poetry of, 29, 51; on the octosyllabic couplet, 267; on romantic poetry, 53 n.
Secondary accent, 167, 172–175; bearing the rime, 296.
Septenary metre, 277.
Sestina, 337.
Shakspere, W., *Antony and Cleopatra*, 83; *Come unto these yellow sands*, 62; *Cymbeline*, 91, 313; *Hamlet*, 88–90, 201; *Hark, hark, the lark*, 63; *Henry V*, 82; *Julius Cæsar*, 90; *King John*, 186; *King Lear*, 90, 107, 202; *Macbeth*, 90, 107; *Measure for Measure*, 186; *Merchant of Venice*, 249; *Midsummer Night's Dream*, 20, 97, 103, 107, 214; *O mistress mine*, 62; *Othello*, 84, 90, 202; *Rape of Lucrece*, 314; *Richard II*, 143; *Romeo and Juliet*, 90, 107; *Sonnets*, 57, 58, 70, 291, 329; *Tempest*, 84, 103, 107; *Troilus and Cressida*, 211; *Who is Sylvia*, 62; *Winter's Tale*, 91, 263; on the imagination, 20, 97; prose in the dramas of, 201, 202; verse of the late dramas of, 264.
Shaksperean sonnet, 328.
Sharp, W., on the ode, 347; on the sonnet, 331.
Shawcross, J., on Coleridge's theory of the imagination, 109–111.
Shelley, P. B., *Adonais*, 69, 143, 298, 318; *Cloud*, 146, 278, 295 n.; *Epipsychidion*, 270; *Indian Serenade*, 63, 316; *Ode to Naples*, 68, 341; *One word is too often profaned*, 316; *O World, O Life, O Time*, 320; *Prometheus Unbound*, 81, 82; *Queen Mab*, 346; *Sensitive Plant*, 214, 309; *To a Skylark*, 65, 98, 143, 199, 255, 312; *Triumph of Life*, 301; *When the lamp is shattered*, 246; decasyllabic couplets of, 270; on metre, 16, 17; on the nature of poetry, 2, 15 n., 22, 116, 119; subjective element in the poetry of, 57 n.
Sidney, P., *My true love hath my heart*, 63; classical measures imitated by, 322; on metre, 16, 17; sonnets of, 70.
Simile, 142–144.
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, 52.
Six-stress verse, iambic, 276; dactylic, 283.
Skeat, W. W., on the nature of English rhythm, 173, 225.
Slurring, 243–245.
Song, 62–64; types of lyric as determined by their relation to, 64–66.
Song of Roland, 43.
Sonnet, 70, 71, 325–332; English type of, 328; Italian type of, 326.
Sounds of verse, relation of to the imagination, 212–216, 219.
Southey, R., *Curse of Kehama*, 48, 346; *Roderick*, 48; *Thalaba*, 346; on dactylic hexameter, 285.
Spedding, J., on dactylic hexameter, 285.
Spenser, E., *Eclogue on the death of Sidney*, 69; *Epithalamion*, 67, 342; *Faerie Queene*, 47, 107, 114, 148; *Prothalamion*, 342; *Shepherd's Calender*, 41, 268; sonnets of, 70, 329.
Spenserian stanza, 276, 304, 317, 318, 324.
Spondee, 233.
Stanza, 301–325; formed by rime, 302; principles governing the structure of, 303–305; types of, 306–325.
Stedman, E. C., on the func-

tion of metre, 203; on the nature of poetry, 3.
Stevenson, R. L., on tone-quality, 211.
Stone, S. J., *The church's one foundation*, 64.
Stress, see Accent.
Style, poetical, 113, 128–154.
Substitution of metricalfeet, 242.
Suckling, J., *Ballad upon a Wedding*, 143.
Sully, J., on the imagination, 104.
Sumer is icumen in, 56.
Surrey, Earl of, sonnets of, 328.
Swinburne, A. C., *Appeal*, 315; *Armada*, 295; *Atalanta in Calydon*, 321: *Ballad of François Villon*, 336; *Before Dawn*, 291; *Choriambics*, 235; *Death of Wagner*, 245; *Dedication of Poems and Ballads*, 303; *Garden of Proserpine*, 316; *Hertha*, 312; *Hesperia*, 280; *In the Water*, 180; *Laus Veneris*, 220, 310; *Leper*, 172 n.; *Sapphics*, 322; *Thalassius*, 346; *Tristram of Lyonesse*, 52, 261; verse of, 175, 180, 279, 280; on English dactylic verse, 285; on Greek anapestic verse, 278 n.; on Milton's choral odes, 347.
Syllabic verse, 240 n., 245, 272 n.
Syllables, dropped from the verse scheme, 185, 186; length of in English, 175–183.
Symonds, J. A., on blank verse, 275, 276.
Synecdoche, 149 n.

Tail-rime stanza, 313, 319 n.
Tasso, T., *Jerusalem Delivered*, 43
Tennyson, A., *Alcaics on Milton*, 322; *Boadicea*, 288; *Break, break, break*, 185; *Charge of the Light Brigade*, 35; *Coming of Arthur*, 213; *Crossing the Bar*, 145; *Dora*, 41, 53, 124; *Enoch Arden*, 211–213, 250 *Geraint and Enid*, 242; *Grandmother*, 35; *Higher Pantheism*, 66; *Idylls of the King*, 53, 54 n., 118, 259 n.; *In Memoriam*, 37, 57, 140, 309, 323; *Lady of Shalott*, 298; *Last Tournament*, 250; *Locksley Hall*, 281, 306; *Lotos Eaters*, 318; *Lucretius*, 37; *Maud*, 36, 37, 247, 248; *Move eastward, happy earth*, 124; *Northern Farmer*, 282; *Œnone*, 152; *Oriana*, 320; *Palace of Art*, 323; *Princess*, 64, 249, 273, 294; *Promise of May*, 124 n.; *Revenge*, 54, 248, 346; *Rizpah*, 35, 247; *St. Simeon Stylites*, 37; *Sweet and Low*, 63; *Tears, Idle Tears*, 64, 302; *Tithonus*, 35; *To Maurice*, 310, 311, 322 n.; *To Virgil*, 281; *Two Voices*, 307, 324; *Ulysses*, 35; *Vision of Sin*, 96; *Wellington Ode*, 68, 343, 344; imitations of classical metres by, 288; preference of for long stressed syllables, 179; tone-quality in the verse of, 211–213; variable cesura in the verse of, 259 n.
Tennyson, C., *Steam Threshing Machine*, 125 n.
Tennyson, F., *Dream of Autumn*, 310; *Glory of Nature*, 312.
Tercet, 307.
Terza rima, 300, 301, 304, 305.
Thackeray, *Ballads*, 268.
Thomas, W., on Milton's verse, 244.
Thomson, J., *Castle of Indolence*, 214; *Seasons*, 34, 55.
Thomson, J., *City of Dreadful Night*, 315.
Thomson, W., on the relation of musical rhythm to that of verse, 189, 191.
Thorndike, A. H., on tragedy, 90; on tragi-comedy, 92.
Tolman, A. H., on tone-quality, 218, 219.
Tomlinson, W., on the sonnet, 326, 331.

Tone-quality, 207–220; in blank verse, 274.
Tragedy, 86–91; themes of, 124; relation of to verse form, 200–202.
Tragi-comedy, 91, 92.
Tribrach, 234.
Triolet, 333, 334.
Triple ending, 256.
Triple rime, 291–293.
Triplet, 271.
Triplett, N., on the time relations of various metres, 229 n.
Trisyllabic metre, irregularity of, 245, 246.
Trochaic metres, 280–282; how distinguished from iambic, 226–231; why avoided in English verse, 265, 266.
Trochee, 223.
Tropes, 142–149.
Truncation of verses, 254, 255.
Truth, relation of to poetry, 19, 115–121.
Tumbling verse, 267.

Ugliness, relation of to beauty in art, 114, 115.
Unities, dramatic, 83–85.
Unity, a quality of epic poetry, 45; of lyric poetry, 58; of dramatic poetry, 76.
Unity in variety, a principle of rhythmical form, 194; a principle of stanza form, 304.
Universal (the) as an element of art, 12–15, 121, 122.

Vergil, *Æneid*, 43.
Verrier, P., on the division of metrical feet, 239 n.
Vers de société, 71–73, 333.
Villanelle, 335.
Villon, F., *Ballade of Dead Ladies*, 336.
Volkelt, J., on tragedy, 79, 90.
Vowels, length of in English, 176; quality of as used in verse, 210, 219.

Waddington, S., on the sonnet 331.
Waller, E., *Go, Lovely Rose*, 312; *vers de société* of, 73.
Watson, W., *Autumn*, 319; *Columbus*, 316; *Hymn to the Sea*, 287; *Ode in May*, 316.
Watts, T., on concreteness as a poetical quality, 139: on the epic, 46; on the function of metre, 203; on the metrical element in poetry, 17; on the nature of poetry, 3, 22; on the relation of poetry to other arts, 8; on Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality*, 345.
Weak ending, 264.
Wells, C., on *vers de société*, 72 n., 73 n.
Werner, R. M., on lyrical poetry, 59.
Wesley, C., *Jesus, Lover of my Soul*, 64.
White, G., on artificial French stanza forms, 336, 339.
Whittier, J. G., religious lyrics of, 64.
Woodberry, G. E., on the heroic couplet, 270.
Woodbridge, E., on the drama, 79.
Wordsworth, W., *Beggars*, 35; *Blind Highland Boy*, 151; *Daisy*, 317; *Excursion*, 37, 39, 131; *Highland Girl*, 65; *Idiot Boy*, 14; *Intimations of Immortality*, 68, 101, 199, 343–345; *I wandered lonely as a cloud* (*Daffodils*), 64, 313; *Last of the Flock*, 35, 135; *Lucy Gray*, 35, 57 n., 308; *Lyrical Ballads*, 34, 126; *Michael*, 41 n., 53, 124, 128, 130; *Ode to Duty*, 146, 316; *Peter Bell*, 131, 312; *Prelude*, 21; *Sailor's Mother*, 35; *She was a phantom of delight*, 129; *Simon Lee*, 131; *Solitary Reaper*, 316; *The world is too much with us*, 327; *Thorn*, 131, 135, 151; *Tintern*

Abbey, 37; *Two April Mornings*, 35; *Westminster Bridge*, 33; sonnets of, 70, 326; on blank verse, 275; his classification of poetry, 31; on the function of metre, 194, 197; on the imagination, 21, 104–106; on the lyric, 65 n.; on the nature of poetry, 2, 14; on the relation of poetry and knowledge, 119; on the sonnet, 71; on the subject matter of poetry, 128; his theory of poetic diction, 132–138.
Whitman, W., verse of, 15, 348.
Worsfold, W. B., on tragic katharsis, 88 n.
Wrenched accent, 172 n., 296 n.
Yeats, W. B., *Rose of the World*, 312.
Young, E., didactic poetry of, 39.